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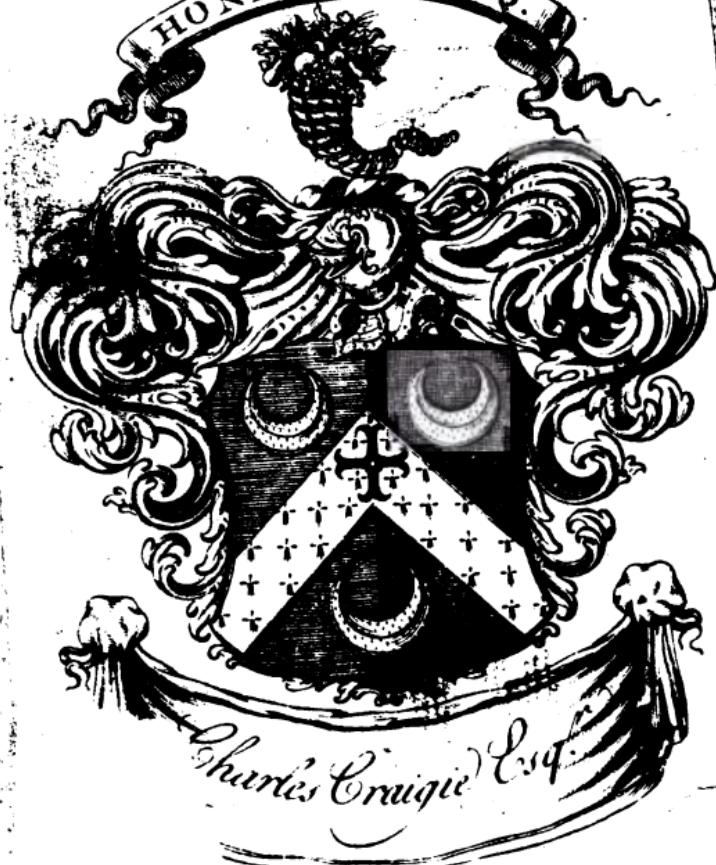
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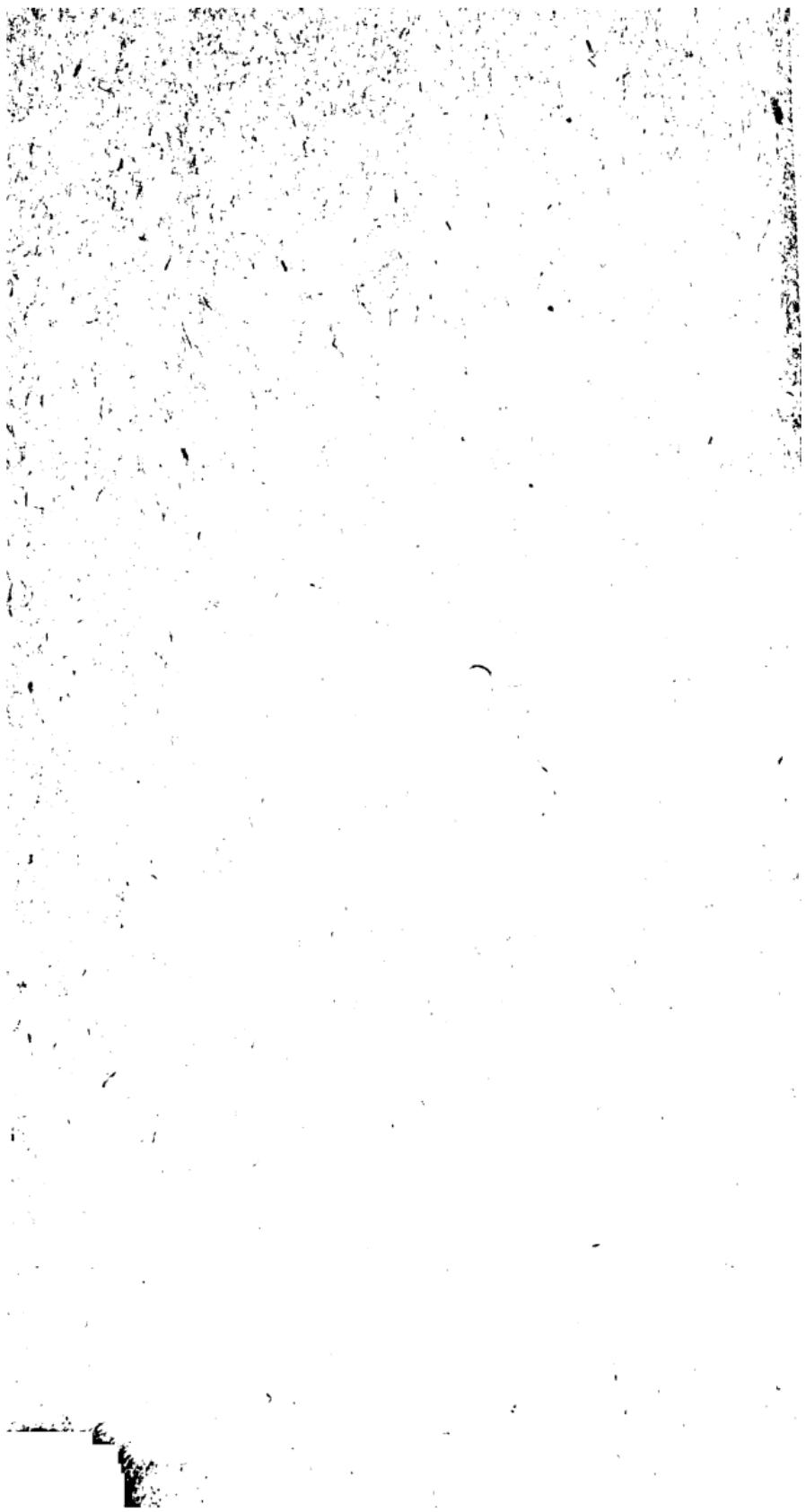
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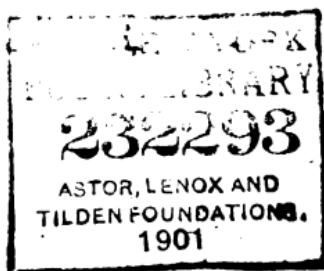
THE
HISTORY
OF
Miss *Betsy Thoughtless.*
VOL. III.



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THE
HISTORY
OF
MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

C H A P. I.

Relates only to such things, as the reader may reasonably expect would happen.

S. much taken up, as miss Betsy was, with the pleasure of having gained a new admirer, she could not forbear, after she came home, making some reflection on the value of her conquest; — she had found nothing agreeable, either in his person, or conversation: — the

VOL. III.

B

first

first seemed to her stiff and awkward and looked, as if not made for his cloaths and the latter, weak, romantic, and bon baſt : — in fine, he was altogether ſuc as ſhe could not think of living with a husband, though the rank and figure ſhe was told he held in the world, made her willing to receive him as a lover. — In fine, though ſhe could not conſent to ſacrifice herſelf to his quality, ſhe took pride to ſacrifice his quality to her vanity.

No overtures of marriage having been made to her ſince mr. Munden began his courtship; and that gentleman growing as ſhe fancied at leaſt, a little too prouding, on finding himſelf the only love ſhe was not a little pleased at the opportunity of giving him a rival, whose quality might over-awe his hopes. — In this idea, ſhe was far from repeniting her behaviour towards him the night before; but how little ſoever ſhe regarded what mortification ſhe gave the men, ſhe always took care to treat her own ſex with a great deal of politeness; and reflecting that ſhe had been guilty of an omission in not ſending her ſervant to excuse herſelf to the ladies, who expected her, we herſelf in the morning to make her own apology.

In the mean time, mr. Munden, who it is certain was very much out of humour, and impatient to let her know some part of the sentiments her message had inspired him with, came to make her a morning visit, having some business, which he knew would detain him from waiting on her in the afternoon. — On finding she was abroad, he desired the maid to favour him with her lady's Stan-dish, which she accordingly bringing to him, he sat down, and without taking much consideration, wrote the following letter, and left for her on the table.

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

MADAM,

Midst the enchanting encouragement, with which you have been pleased to admit my services, I could not, without calling your honour and generosity in question, be altogether void of hope, that you intended to afford them one day, a recompence more ample than a bare acceptance.

Judge then of my surprise, at the repulse I met with at mrs. Modely's door. — I could not think it any breach of the respect I owe you, to call on you

‘ at the house of your mantua-maker ;
‘ — I could not imagine it possible for
‘ you to have any engagements at such
‘ a place, capable of preventing you
‘ from keeping those, that you had
‘ made with persons for whom you
‘ profess an esteem : — on the con-
‘ trary, I rather expected you would
‘ have permitted me to conduct you
‘ thence, with the same readiness you
‘ have done from most of the other places
‘ where you have been, since I first had
‘ the honour of being acquainted with
‘ you.’

‘ I know very well, that it is the duty
‘ of every lover to submit, in all things,
‘ to the pleasure of the beautiful object,
‘ whose chains he wears ; — yet, madam,
‘ as you have hitherto made mine easy,
‘ you must pardon me, when I say, this
‘ sudden transition from gentleness to
‘ cruelty, appears to me to contain a
‘ mystery, which, though I dread, I am
‘ distracted for the explanation of.

‘ Some business of great moment pre-
‘ vents my waiting on you this after-
‘ noon, but shall attend your commands
‘ to-morrow at the usual hour, when I
‘ still flatter myself, you will relieve the
‘ anxieties,

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 5

'anxieties, and put an end to the sus-
pence of him, who is,

'With the greatest sincerity of heart,

'MADAM,

'Your most humble,

'And most faithfully devoted servant,

'G. MUNDEN.'

Miss Betsy, at her return home, found also another billet-directed for her, which they told her, had been brought by a servant belonging to sir Frederick Fineer; — she gave that from mr. Munden, however, the preference of reading first, not indeed through choice, but chance, that happening to be first put into her hands.

As soon as she had looked it over, she laughed, and said to herself, 'The poor man is jealous already, though he knows not of whom, or why; — what will become of him when he shall be convinced? — I suppose he was sure of having me, and 'tis high time to mortify his vanity.'

She then proceeded to sir Frederick's ap-
artments, in which she found herself more
deify'd

6 *The HISTORY of*
deify'd than ever she had been, by all her
lovers put together.

To the nonpareil of her sex, the incom-
parable miss BETSY THOUHTLESS.

• *Divine Charmer,*

• THOUGH I designed myself the
• inexpressible pleasure of kissing
• your fair hands this evening, I could
• not exist till then, without telling you
• how much I adore you : — you are the
• empress of my heart, — the goddess of
• my soul ; — the one loves you with the
• most loyal and obedient passion, — the
• other regards you as the sole mover,
• and director of all its motions.— I can-
• not live without you, — it is you alone
• can make me blest, or miserable. — O
• then pronounce my doom, and keep
• me not suspended between heaven and
• hell. — Words cannot describe the ar-
• dency of my flame ; — it is actions
• only that can do it.— I lay myself, and
• all that I am worth, an humble offer-
• ing at your feet. — Accept it, I be-
• seech you, but accept it soon ; for I
• consume away, in the fire of my im-
• patient wishes, and, in a very short
• time, there will be nothing left for
• you,

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 7

' you, but the shadow of the man, who
' is,

' With the most pure devotion,

' MADAM,

' Your beauty's slave,

' And everlasting adorer,

' F. FINEER.'

' Good lack,' cried miss Betsy, ' he
is in a great haste too, but I fancy he
must wait a while, as many of better
sense have done.—What a romantic jar-
gon is here?—One would think he
had been consulting all the ballads since
fair Rosamond, and the children in the
wood, for fine phrases to melt me into
pity.'

She wondered, as indeed she had good reason, that a man of his birth, and who it must be supposed had an education suitable to it, should express himself in such odd terms; but then she was tempted to imagine, that it was only his over care to please her, had made him stretch his wit beyond its natural extent, and that if he had loved her less, he would have been able to have told her so in a much better stile.—Possessed with this fancy, — ' What a ridiculous thing this love is!' said she: ' What extra-

8 · · · · · *The HISTORY of*

‘ gancies does it some times make men
‘ guilty of! — yet one never sees this
‘ madness in them after they become hus-
‘ bands ; — if I were to marry sir Fre-
‘ derick, I do not doubt but he would
‘ soon recover his senses.’

How does a mind, unbroke with cares
and disappointments, entirely free from
passion, and perfectly at peace with itself,
and with the world, improve, and dwell
on every thing, that affords the least mat-
ter for its entertainment? — This gay
young lady found as much diversion in
anticipating the innocent pranks she in-
tended to play with the authors of these
two letters, as an infant does in first play-
ing with a new baby, and afterwards
plucking it to pieces; so true is the ob-
servation of the poet, that

‘ All are but children of a larger growth.’

But this sprightliness of humour in miss
Betsy, soon received a sad and sudden in-
terruption : — having sent, as she con-
stantly did every day, to enquire after
the health of mr. Goodman, her servant
returnd with an account, that he had
expired that morning. — Though this
was an event, which she, and all who
knew him, had expected for some time,
yet

Miss Betsy Thoughtless. 9

yet could she not be told of the death of a gentleman, under whose care and protection she so long had been, and who had behaved, in all respects, so like a parent towards her, without being very deeply affected with the news : — she was then at dinner, but threw down her knife and fork, rose from the table, and retired to her chamber and wept bitterly ; — the more violent emotions of grief were soon asswaged, but her melancholly and dejection of spirits continued much longer, and while it did so, she had the power of making the most just reflections on the vain pursuits, other fleeting pleasures, and all the noise and flurry of the giddy world. — Love, and all the impertinencies which bear that name, now appeared only worthy her contempt ; and recollecting, that Sir Frederick had mentioned visiting her that evening, she sent a servant immediately to Mrs. Modely's, desiring her to acquaint that gentleman, that she had just lost a very dear friend, and was in too much affliction to admit of any company.

This being the day, on which Mrs. Francis Thoughtless was expected to be in London, this affectionate sister perceiving, by his last letter to her, that his health was not perfectly established, was

under a very great concern, lest he should be put to some inconvenience by mr. Goodman's death, for a proper lodging on his first arrival; but she soon found her tender fears, on this occasion, altogether groundless.

Those objections, which had hindered mr. Thomas Thoughtless from taking her into his family, had not the same weight in relation to mr. Francis, whose sex set him above meddling with those domestic concerns, the command of which he had given to another, and his reputation would suffer nothing by being under the roof with the mistress of his brother's amorous inclinations.

He went to the inn where he knew the L—— stage put up, — welcomed mr. Francis with open arms, as soon as he alighted from the coach, and gave him all the demonstrations of brotherly affection, that the place they were in would admit of; then conducted him to his house, and insisted that he should not think of any other home, till he was better provided for, and settled in the world.

A servant, belonging to the elder mr. Thoughtless, was immediately dispatched

to

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. II

'to miss Betsy, with a letter from the younger, and it was from this man that she received the agreeable intelligence, that the two brothers were together. — The terms in which mr. Francis wrote to her were these :

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

• *My dear sister,*

• HEAVEN be thanked I am at last
• got safe to London ; — a place,
• which, I assure you, some months ago
• I almost despaired of ever seeing more.
• My brother has just given me an ac-
• count of the death of honest mr. Good-
• man, and, as I doubt not but you are
• very much concerned, as indeed we
• have all reason to be, for the loss of
• so sincere and valuable a friend, I am
• very impatient to see you, and give
• you what consolation is in my power ;
• but the fatigue of my journey, after so
• long an illness, requires my taking some
• immediate repose ; — I shall, however,
• wait on you to-morrow morning, 'till
• when, believe me, as ever,

• With the greatest sincerity,

• Dear sister,

• Your affectionate brother,

• And humble servant,

• F. THOUGHTLESS.

* P.S. 'My brother purposes to come with
me, but if any thing should happen
to prevent his visit, you may depend
on one from me.— Once more, my
dear sister, good night.'

In the present situation of miss Betsy's mind, she could not have received a more sensible satisfaction, than what she felt on this young gentleman's arrival; but what ensued upon it will in due time and place appear.

C H A P. II.

Contains only some few particulars of little moment in themselves; but serve to usher in matters of more importance.

M R. Goodman, who, both living and dying, had sincerely at heart the welfare of all with whom he had any concern, could not content himself to leave the world, without giving to those, who had been under his care, such advice as he thought necessary for their future happiness.

Accord-

Accordingly, the day preceding that which happened to be his last, he sent for Mr. Thoughtless, and on his being come, and seated by his bedside, he took his hand, and began to remonstrate to him, in the most pathetic, though very gentle, terms, how unjustifiable to the eyes of heaven, and how disreputable to those of the world, it was, to avow and indulge, in the public manner he did, an unwarrantable flame.

‘I never was severe,’ said he, ‘in censuring the frailties of youth and nature; but think the claim they have to pardon consists chiefly in an endeavour to conceal them; — when gloried in, they lose the name of frailties, and become vices: — besides, others by our example might be emboldened to offend, and if so, what are we but accessory to their faults, and answerable for them, as well as for our own? — You are at present,’ continued he, ‘the head of your family, — have a large estate, — are young, — handsome, — accomplished; — in fine, have all the requisites to make a shining character in life, and to be a service, and an honour to your country. — How great a pity would it be, that such a stock of fortune’s

‘ fortune’s blessings, — such present benefits, and such glorious expectations, should all be squandered in the purchase of one guilty pleasure !’

He then proceeded to a short discussion of the difference of a lawful and an unlawful communication between the sexes ; — he expatiated on the wise and laudable institution of marriage ; — the solid comforts arising from that state, in the choice of a worthy partner ; — the many advantages of an honourable alliance ; — the serene and lasting pleasures to be found in the society of a faithful, discreet, and endearing companion. — A wife,’ — said he, with a sigh, which the memory of his own hard fate drew from him, ‘ may sometimes be bad, but a mistress we are sure is never good ; — her very character denies all confidence to be reposed in her ; — it is the interest of a wife to secure the honour of her husband, because she must suffer in his disgrace ; — a mistress having no reputation of her own, regards not that of her keeper. — It is the interest of a wife to be frugal of her husband’s substance, because she must be a sharer in those misfortunes, which the want of œconomy creates ; — but it is the interest of a mistress to sell her favours.

“ as

' as dear as she can, and to make the best provision she can for herself, because her subsistence is precarious, and depends wholly on the will of him who supports her.— These, my dear friend,' continued he, ' are truths, which I hope you will not wait for experience to convince you of.'

It is probable Mr. Thoughtless did not relish this admonition; — he seemed, however, to take it in good part, and returned for answer, that he should ever retain the most grateful sense of the kind concern he expressed for him, and added, that whatever inconveniences he might have been hurried into, by an inadvertent passion, he should always take care not to become the dupe of any woman.

Mr. Goodman then fell into some discourse, concerning the younger Mr. Thoughtless, and the elder telling him, that, by his interest, he procured a commission for him on very easy terms, that worthy old gentleman appeared very much pleased, and said, he hoped they would always live together in that perfect amity, which both good policy and nature demands, between persons of the same blood.

* And

‘ And now,’ continued he, ‘ I have
but one thing more to recommend to
you, — and that is in relation to your
sister, miss Betsy. — I doubt not of her
innocence, but I fear her conduct ; —
her youth, — her beauty, — the gaiety
of her temper, and the little vanities of
her sex, are every day exposing her to
temptations fatal to reputation ; — I
wish, therefore, she were well married ;
— I know not how the courtship of
mr. Trueworth happened to be broke
off, perhaps on some trifling occasion,
either on the one or the other side : —
if so, ’tis likely mr. Francis, when he
comes to town, may bring about a re-
conciliation, — According to my Judge-
ment of mankind, she cannot make a
more deserving choice. — There is an-
other gentleman, who now makes his
addresses to her, — his name is Mun-
den, — but I know nothing of his cha-
racter, — he never applied to me, nor
did she consult me on the affair ; — it
will however be a brother’s part in you,
to enquire how far he may be worthy
of her.’

Perceiving Mr. Thoughtless listened
to him, with a good deal of attention, he
went on ; — ‘ I should also think it right’,
said

said he, ‘ that while she remains in a single state, she should be boarded in some social, reputable family; — I do not like this living by herself, — her humour is too volatile to endure solitude; she must have her amusements; and the want of them at home, naturally carries her in search of them abroad: — I could wish,’ added he, ‘ that you would tell her what I have said to you upon this subject; she is convinced I am her friend, I believe has some regard for me, and it may be, my dying admonitions will have greater effect upon her, than all she has heard from me before.’

Mr. Goodman, after this, beginning to grow extremely faint, and altogether unable to hold any farther discourse, the brother of miss Betsy judged it convenient to retire, assuring the other, as he took his leave, that no part of what he had said, should be lost upon him.

Though the promise he had made mr. Goodman, was chiefly dictated by his complaisance, yet it was not totally forgot after he had left him. — As to what that worthy gentleman had said, in relation to his own manner of living, he thought he had talked well, but he had talked like an old

old man, and that it was time enough for him to part with his pleasures, when he had no longer any inclination to pursue them ; — but what had been alledged to him concerning his sister's conduct, made a much deeper impression on his mind : — he considered, that the honour of a family depended greatly on the female part of it, and therefore resolved to omit nothing in his power, to prevent miss Betsy from being caught by any snares, that might be laid to entrap her innocence.

He communicated to mr. Francis Thoughtless on his arrival, all that mr. Goodman had said to him on this score, and his own sentiments upon it : — that young gentleman was entirely of his brother's opinion in this point, and they both agreed, that marriage was the only sure refuge from temptation, for a young woman of miss Betsy's disposition and humour. — They had a very long and pretty serious conversation on this head, the result of which was, that they should go together to her, and each exert all the influence he had over her, in order to draw from her some farther eclaircissement intentions, than could yet be gathered of her from her behaviour.

Miss

Miss Betsy, who little suspected their design, received them with all the tenderness that could be expected from a sister, especially her brother Frank, whose return after so long an absence, gave her, in reality, an infinite satisfaction; but she had scarce time to give him all the welcomes, with which her heart overflowed, before the elder Mr. Thoughtless fell on the topic of Mr. Goodman, and the misfortune they sustained, in the loss of so good a friend; after which, ‘He has left you a legacy, sister,’ said he: — ‘A legacy!’ cried she, ‘pray of what kind?’ ‘Such a one,’ replied he, ‘as perhaps you will not be very well pleased in receiving, nor would I chuse to deliver it, but for two reasons; — first, that the injunctions of a dying friend are not to be dispensed with; and secondly, that it is of a nature, I fear, you stand in too much need of.’

Miss Betsy, whose ready wit made her presently comprehend the meaning of these words, replied with some smartness, that whatever she stood in need of, she should certainly receive with pleasure, and he might have spared himself the trouble of a prelude, for any thing that could be de-

delivered by him, or bequeathed to her by mr. Goodman.

He then told her, how that gentleman, the day before his death, had sent for him, ‘ For no other purpose,’ said he, ‘ than to talk to me on your account, and to exhort me as your brother, and now your guardian, to have a watchful eye over all your actions; — to remind you of some inadvertencies of the past, and to warn you against falling into the like for the future: — sorry I am, to find myself under a necessity of speaking to you in this manner; but harsh as it may seem at present, I doubt not, but you will hereafter own, is a proof of the greatest affection I could shew you.’ He then repeated to her, all that mr. Goodman had said to him, in relation to her; to which he also added many things of his own, which he thought might serve to strengthen, and enforce the arguments made use of by the other.

It is impossible to describe the various and disturbed emotions, which discovered themselves in the countenance of miss Betsy, during the whole time her brother was speaking; — she looked extremely grave, at the manner in which he ushered what he had to deliver to her from mr. Good-

Goodman, — appeared confounded and perplexed at what she heard that gentleman had said concerning Mr. Truworth, — was quite peevish at the mention of Mr. Munden, but when told of the dangers to which she was exposed, by living alone, and trusted with the management of herself, her eyes sparkled with disdain and rage, at a remonstrance she looked upon as so unnecessary and so unjust.

If this message had been sent to her by any other, than Mr. Goodman, whose memory, on account of the benefits she had received from him, was precious to her; or had it been repeated by any other mouth than that of a brother, she had certainly vented the indignation she was possessed of, in the most bitter terms; but gratitude, respect, and love, denying her this remedy, she burst into a flood of tears, — ‘ Good God ! ’ cried she, ‘ what have I done to raise such cruel suggestions in the heart of any friend ? — Which of my actions can malice construe into a crime ? — I challenge my worst of enemies to prove me guilty of any thing might justly cast a blemish on my reputation, much less to call my virtue in question.’

The two brothers seemed very much moved at the agonies that they saw her in, especially the elder, who repenting he had gone so far, took her in his arms, and tenderly embracing her, ‘ My dear ‘ sister,’ said he, ‘ you wrong your ‘ friends, while you imagine yourself ‘ wronged by them ; — your reputation, ‘ I hope, is clear ; — your virtue not sus- ‘ pected ; — it is not to accuse you of ‘ any guilt, but to prevent your inno- ‘ cence from becoming a prey to the ‘ guilt of others, that mr. Goodman sent ‘ you his dying admonition, or that I ‘ took upon me to deliver it.’

Mr. Francis Thoughtless seconded what the other had said, and both joining their endeavours to pacify the late tempest of her mind, she soon recovered that good humour and cheerfulness, which was too natural to her to be long suspended by any accident whatsoever.

‘ I flattered myself,’ said the younger of these gentlemen, ‘ that cautions of this kind would have been altogether unnecessary, and that before now you would have been disposed of to a man, under whose protection all that is dear to your sex had been secure ; — I need not tell you,

' you,' continued he, ' that I mean mr. Trueworth.'

Miss Betsy looking a little confus'd, and not making any reply, the elder mr. Thoughtless immediately took up the word, and said, he had heard so high a character of that gentleman's merit, that he had wished for few things with more ardency, than the honour of being allied to him, and that he never could find out what objection his sister had, to accept of an offer so every way to her advantage.

To this miss Betsy made answer, though not without some disorder, and hesitation in her speech,— that she had never made any objection, either to his person or qualification;— but that she did not care to marry yet a while, and he had not love enough to wait the event of her resolution in that point;— that, besides, their humours did not suit, and there was little likelihood they would agree better after marriage;— that there had been a little pique between them;— that he gave himself airs of resenting something she had said, and thereupon had sent her a very impertinent letter, since which she had never seen him;— ' so that,' added she, ' our breaking off acquaintance is wholly owing to himself.'

Mr.

Mr. Francis not doubting but this letter would explain what he so much desired to know the truth of, cried out to her hastily, to let him see it; — miss Betsy already repented, that she had mentioned such a thing, as she was conscious there were some expressions in it, which would greatly countenance the disagreeable remonstrances she had just now received; but she wanted artifice to pretend, she had either lost, or burnt it, and went that instant to her cabinet, where easily finding it, she gave it into her brother's hands, with these words, ‘ he reproaches me,’ said she, ‘ with things I know nothing of, and in terms, which, I think, do not very well become the passion he pretended to have for me.

‘ That he once loved you,’ said mr. Francis, coolly, ‘ I am very certain; — how his sentiments may be changed, and the reasons of their being so, this may, perhaps, give me room to guess.’ He then read the letter aloud, and while he was doing so, several times cast a look at miss Betsy, which shewed he was highly dissatisfied with her, for having given any cause for the reflections contained in it.

‘ I see very well,’ said he, returning her the letter ‘ that he has done with you, and that it is your own fault : — I shall, however, talk to him on the affair, and if there be a possibility of accommodating matters between you, I shall endeavour it for your sake.’

Here miss Betsy’s spirit roused itself, in spite of the respect she had for her brothers ; ‘ I beseech you, sir,’ said she to mr. Francis, ‘ not to go about to force your sister upon any man ; — if mr. Truworth, of his own accord, renews the professions he has made, I shall on your account receive them as I did before any misunderstanding happened between us ; but as to changing my condition, either in favour of him or any other man, I know not when, or whether ever I shall be in the humour to do it : — you may, however, if you please, continued she, hear what he has to say for himself, and what mighty matters against me, that can excuse the abrupt manner of his quitting me.’

‘ I know not as yet,’ replied mr. Francis, with some vehemence, ‘ whether I shall interfere any farther in the thing, and am heartily sorry I have given you III. C

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‘ given myself any trouble about it,
‘ you so little consider your own inter-
‘ est, or will follow the advice of those,
‘ are at the pains to consider for you,
‘ Come, come,’ said the elder
Thoughtless, ‘ you are both too ‘ fi-
‘ — I am confident my sister has
‘ much good sense to suffer any littl-
‘ er price to impede her real happiness;
‘ therefore, prithee Frank, let us
‘ this subject at present, and leave h-
‘ er own reflections.’

To which miss Betsy answered, there required but little reflection to instruct her what she ought to do, and though she could not consent to be always in leading-strings, the love respect she had for her brother, would never permit her to do any thing without their approbation. There passed no more of consequence between them during this visit; but what had been said failed to engross pretty much the minds of them after they were separated.



C H

C H A P. III.

*Has somewhat more business in it than
the former.*

THOUGH miss Betsy was very conscious of the merits of Mr. Trueworth, and equally convinced of the friendship her brother Francis had for him, and had therefore doubted not, but when that young gentleman should arrive, he would reason strongly with her, on the little regard she had paid to his recommendations, or the advantages of the alliance he had proposed; yet she did not expect the satisfaction of their first meeting would have been imbibited, by a resentment, such, as it seemed to her, he had testified on the occasion.

She easily perceived the two brothers had consulted together, before they came to her, in what manner they should behave towards her; and this she looked upon as a sort of proof, that they intended to assume an authority over her, to which they had no claim. — ‘The love I have for them,’ said she to herself, ‘will always make me take a pleasure in oblig-

‘ ing them, and doing every thing they
‘ desire of me ; but they are intirely mis-
‘ taken, if they imagine it in their power
‘ to awe me into compliance with their
‘ injunctions.’

‘ And yet,’ cried she again, ‘ what
‘ other aim than my happiness and in-
‘ terest can they propose to themselves,
‘ in desiring to have me under their di-
‘ rection ? — Poor Frank has given me
‘ proofs, that I am very dear to him,
‘ and, I believe, my brother Thoughtless
‘ is not wanting in natural affection for
‘ me ; why then should I reject the coun-
‘ cil of two friends, whose sincerity there
‘ is not a possibility of suspecting ? —
‘ They know their sex, and the dangers
‘ to which ours are exposed, by the ar-
‘ tifices of base designing men : — I have
‘ had some escapes, which I ought always
‘ to remember, enough to keep me from
‘ falling into the like ugly accidents again ;
‘ — how near was I to everlasting ruin, by
‘ slighting the warning given me by mr.
‘ Trueworth !’

This reflection bringing into her mind
many passages of her behaviour towards
that gentleman, she could not forbear
justifying his conduct, and condemning
her own : — ‘ I have certainly used him
‘ ill ;

'ill,' pursued she, with a sigh, ' and if he should return, and forgive what is past, I think I ought, in gratitude, to reward his love !'

She was in this contemplating mood when her servant told her; that mrs. Modely had been to wait upon her, but on hearing her brothers were with her, went away, saying, she would come again, which she now was, and begged to speak with her.

Miss Betsy was in this moment just beginning to feel some sort of pleasure in the idea of mr. Trueworth's renewing his addresses, and was a little peevish at the interruption; — she ordered, however, that the woman should come up, — ' Well, mrs. Modely,' said she, as soon as she saw her enter, ' what stuff have you brought me now ?'

' Ah, charming miss Betsy,' replied she, ' you fine ladies, and great fortunes, think you may do any thing with the men: — poor sir Frederick will break his heart, or run mad, that's to be sure, if you don't send him a favourable answer to this letter.' — In speaking these words, she delivered a letter to miss Betsy, which that young lady opened

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with a double air, and is cont
in two lines:

"The family to be present
most beautiful of all beaut
super-excellent miss Ba
THOUGHTLESS.

"Almond-branches,

"I AM given to the very
best you have any subject fo
me, but am very certain, that
my opinion of your divine pref
erence a more mortal fib than a
you have imagined can possibly
have combined with the fire
within me.—I have taken neither
the first, since first I saw you
but had only in the idea of
you.—Or nourish me with
you.—Hide me in your b
from the bad friend despair, that is
now so long held on me.

"The poison I am possessed of for
is not like that of other men; — I c
have with the various forms of courtly
there is no medium between de
and the expression of you; — the circ
not arms, or a cold leaden shrou
one of the other most very shor
of poison. — But I depend upo

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 31

' the heaven of your mercy, and hope
' you will permit me to pour forth the
' abundance of my soul before you, — to
' bask in the sunshine of your smiles, and
' to try, at least, if no spark of that
' amorous flame, which burns me up,
' has darted upon you, and kindled you
' into soft desires.

' O! if any part of my impatient fires,
' by secret sympathy, should happily have
' reached your breast, never was there a
' pair so transcendently blest as we should
' be. — The thought is rapture! — ex-
' tacy too big for words! — too mighty
' for description! — and I must there-
' fore, for a few hours, defer any further
' endeavours to convince you, — till when
' I remain,

' Absorbed in the delightful image,
 ' Dear quintessence of joy,
 ' Your most devoted,
 ' Most obsequious,
 ' And most adoring vassal,
 ' F. FINEER.'

In spite of the serious humour miss Betsy was in, she could not read this without bursting into a violent fit of laughter; but soon composing herself,
If I had not seen the author of this

‘ epistle,’ said she, to mrs. Modely, ‘ I
should have thought it had been sent
me by some school-boy, and was the
first essay o’ describing a passion he had
heard talk of, and was ambitious of
being supposed capable of feeling; —
but sure,’ continued she, ‘ the man
must be either mad, or most impudently
vain, to write to me, as if he imagined
I was in love with him, and would
have him on his first putting the
question to me.’

‘ Ah, my dear madam,’ said mrs.
Modely, ‘ do you consider, that a young
gentleman of ten thousand a year in
possession, as much more in reversion,
and the expectation of a coronet, is apt
to think he may have any body?’ —
‘ If he does he may find himself mistaken,’
replied miss Betsy haughtily, and then in
the same breath softening her voice, ‘ but
are you sure,’ cried she, ‘ that he has
so much?’ — ‘ Sure, madam!’ said
mrs. Modely, ‘ aye, as sure as that I am
alive; — I have heard it from twenty
people: — they say, he has a house in
the country as big as a town, and above
fifty servants in it; — but he is but
just come to London, and has not had
time to settle his equipage as yet, but
he has bespoke the finest coach, and
the

‘ the gentlest chariot you ever saw, — all in a new taste, and perfectly French; — they are quite finished, all but the painting, and that only waits till he knows whether he may quarter your arms or not.’

‘ Blefs me !’ cried miss Betsy, ‘ does he think to gain me in the time of painting a coach ?’ — ‘ Nay, I don’t know,’ answered mrs. Modely ; ‘ but I think such an offer is not to be trifled with ; — he is violently in love with you, that is certain : — he does not desire a penny of your fortune, and will settle upon you, notwithstanding, his whole estate, if you require it.’

Miss Betsy made no answer, but paused for a considerable time, and seemed, as it were, in a profound reverie : — at last coming out of it, — ‘ He is for doing things in such a hurry,’ said she ; — ‘ I have seen him no more than once, and scarce know what sort of a person he is, — how then can I tell, whether I ever shall be able to bring myself to like him or not?’

‘ You may give him leave to wait on you however,’ cried the other. — Here miss Betsy was again silent for some moments ;

ments ; but mrs. Modely repeating her request, and enforcing it with some arguments, — ‘ Well then,’ replied she, ‘ I shall not go to church this afternoon, and will see him if he comes ; — but dear Modely,’ continued she, ‘ don’t let him assume on the permission I give him, — tell him, you had all the difficulty in the world to prevail on me to do it ; for, in my mind, he already hopes too much, and fears too little. for a man so prodigiously in love.’ — Mrs. Modely on this assured her, she might trust to her management, and took her leave, very well pleased with the success of her negociation.

We often see the love of grandeur prevail over persons of the ripest years, and knowledge. — What guilty lengths have not some men run to attain it, even among those, who have been esteem’d the wifest, and most honest of their time, when once a title, a bit of ribband cross their shoulder, or any other gew-gaw trophy of the favour of a court has been hung out, how has their virtue veered and yeilded to the temptation ? — It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that a young heart, unexperienced in the fallacy of shew, should be dazzled with the tinsel glitter : — the good sense of miss Betsy made

made her see, that this last triumph of her charms, was a vain, silly and affected coxcomb ; but then this coxcomb had a vast estate, and the enchanting ideas of the figure she should make, if in possession of it, in some moments out-balanced the contempt she had of the owner's person, and understanding.

The glare of pomp and equipage, the pleasure of having it in her power of taking the upper-hand of those of her own rank, and of vying with those of a more exalted one, it is certain had very potent charms for her ; but then there was a delicacy in her nature, that would not suffer the desire of attaining it to be altogether predominant : — the thoughts of being sacrificed to a man for whom it was impossible for her to have either love, or esteem ; — to be obliged to yield that through duty, which inclination shuddered at, struck a sudden damp to all the rising fires of pride and ambition in her soul, and convinced her, that greatness would be too dearly purchased at the expence of peace.

... In fine, she consider'd on these things so long, that she grew weary of considering all, so resolved to let the matter rest, — give herself no farther pain, — leave to chance

She was now beginning to please herself with the thoughts how Mr. Munden, whom she expected that evening, would behave at sight of his new rival, and how Sir Frederick Fineer would bear the presence of a man, whom she was resolved to shew him had the same pretensions as himself ; — but tho' she happened to be disappointed in her expectations in this, she did not want other sufficient matter for her diversion.

Sir Frederick, to shew the impatience of his passion, came very soon after dinner ; — she received him with as grave an air as she could possibly put on, but it was not in her power, nor indeed would have been in any one's else, to continue it for any long time : — his conversation was much of a piece with his letters, and his actions even more extravagant.

Never was such an Orlando Furioso in love ; — on his first approach, he had indeed the boldness to take one of her hands and put it to his mouth, but afterwards whatever he said to her was on his knees ; — he threw himself prostrate on the

the carpet before her, grasp'd her feet, and alternately kissed each shoe, with the same vehemence, as he could have done her lips, and as much devotion as the pilgrims at Rome do the Pantofle of his Holiness.— Darts! — Flames! — Immortal joys! — Death! — Despair! — Heaven! — Hell! ever-during woe, and all the epithets in the whole vocabulary of Cupid's legend, begun and ended every sentence of his discourse.— This way of entertaining her was so extraordinary, and so new to her, that she could not forbear sometimes returning it with a smile, which, in spite of her endeavours to preserve a serious deportment, diffused a gaiety through all her air.

Those who had told Sir Ferderick, that the way to please this lady, was to sooth her vanity, either knew not, or had forgot to inform him, she had also an equal share of good sense; so that mistaking the change he had observed in her looks for an indication of her being charmed with his manner of behaviour, he acted and re-acted, over all his fopperies, and felt as much secret pride in repeating them, as a celebrated singer on the stage does in obeying the voice of an encore.

It is probable, however, that he would have continued in them long enough to have tired miss Betsy so much, as to have made her give him some demonstrative mark, that the pleasantry he had seen her in proceeded rather from derision than satisfaction, if, divine service being ended, some ladies, as they came from church, had not called to visit her. — The sound of company coming up stairs, obliged him to break off in the middle of a rhapsody, which he, doubtless, thought very fine, and he took his leave somewhat hastily, telling her, the passion with which he was inflamed, was too fierce to be restrained within those bounds which she might expect before witnesses, and that he would wait on her the next day, when he hoped she would be more at liberty to receive his vows.

Eased of the constraint which decency, and the respect which she thought due to his quality, had laid her under while he was there, her natural sprightliness burst with double force. — Mr. Munden, who came in soon after, felt the effects of it: — he indeed enjoyed a benefit he little dreamt of. — The absurd conversation of a rival he as yet knew nothing of, served to make all he said sound more agree-

agreeable than ever in the ears of his mistress: — in this excess of good humour she not only made a handsome apology for the treatment he had received at mrs. Modelly's, a thing she had never before vouchsafed to do to any of her lovers, but also gave him an invitation to 'squire her to a country-dancing, in which she had engaged to make one the ensuing night!

CHAP. IV.

*If it were not for some few particulars,
might as well be passed over as read.*

MISS Betsy, one would think, had now sufficient matter to employ her meditations, on the score of those two lovers, who at present laid close siege to her, neither of whom she was willing to part entirely with; and to retain either she found required some management: — Mr. Munden was beginning to grow impatient at the little progress his long courtship had made on her affections; and sir Frederick Fineer, on the other hand, was for bringing things to a conclusion at once: — she was also every day receiving transient addresses from many

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many others, which, though not meant seriously by those that made them, nor taken so by her, served occasionally to fill up any vacuum in her mind; — yet was it not in the power of love, — gallantry, or any other amusement, to drive the memory of Mr. Trueworth wholly out of her head; which shews, that to a woman of sense, a man of real merit, even though he is not loved, can never be totally indifferent.

But she was at this time more than ordinarily agitated on that gentleman's account; — she doubted not but her brother Frank, either had, or would shortly have a long conference with him, on the subject of his desisting his visits to her, and could not keep herself from feeling some palpitations for the event; for though she was not resolved to afford any recompence to his love, she earnestly wished, he should continue to desire it, and that she might still preserve her former dominion over a heart, which she had always looked upon as the most valuable prize of all that her beauty had ever gained.

Thus unreasonable, and indeed unjust, was she in the affairs of love: — in all others she was humane, benevolent, and kind;

kind ; but here covetous, even to greediness, of receiving all, without any intention of making the least return. — In fine, the time was not yet come, when she should be capable of being touched with that herself, which she took so much pride to inspire in others.

Though she could not love, she was pleased with being loved : — no man, of what degree or circumstance soever, could offend her by declaring himself her admirer ; and as much as she despised sir Frederick Fineer for his romantic manner of expressing the passion he professed for her, yet to have missed him out of the number of her train of captives, would have been little less mortification to her, than the loss of a favourite lover would have been to some other women.

That enamorato of all enamoratoes, would not, however, suffer the flame, which he flattered himself with having kindled in her, to grow cool, and ambitious also of shewing his talents in verse as well as prose, sent her that morning the following epistle :

• To

‘ To the bright goddess of my soul,
‘ the adorable miss BETSY
‘ THOUGHTLESS.

‘ *Most divine source of joy,*

‘ TO shew you in what manner I
‘ the hours of absence from you,
‘ at the same time represent the case
‘ lover racked with suspense, and to
‘ alternately between hopes and fears
‘ take the liberty to inscribe to you
‘ inclosed poem, which I most humbly
‘ beseech you to take as it is meant,
‘ tribute of my dutious zeal,—an humble
‘ offering presented at the shrine of
‘ all-glorious beauty, from

‘ *Lovely ruler of my heart,*

‘ Your eternally devoted,

‘ And no less faithful slave,

‘ F. FINN.

' A true picture of my heart, in the different stages of its worship.

A

P O E M,

' Most humbly inscribed to the never-enough deified

' Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

' WHEN first from my unfinish'd
sleep I start,
' I feel a flutt'ring faintness round my
heart;
' A darksome mist, which rises from my
mind,
' And, like sweet sun-shine, leaves your
name behind.

' When from your shadow to yourself
I fly,
' To drink in transport at my thirsty eye,
' Each orb surveys you with a kindling
sight,
' And trembles to sustain the vast delight:
' From head to foot, o'er all your heav'n
they stray,
' Dazzled with lustre in your milky way:
' At last you speak, and, as I start to
hear,
' My soul is all collected in my ear.
 But

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- ‘ But when resistless transport makes
‘ me bold,
- ‘ And your soft hand inclosed in mine I
‘ hold,
- ‘ Then flooding raptures swim through
‘ ev’ry vein,
- ‘ And each swol’n art’ry thrabs with
‘ pleasing pain.
- ‘ Fain would I snatch you to my long-
‘ ing arms,
- ‘ And grasp in extacy your blazing
‘ charms:
- ‘ O then,— how vain the wish that I
‘ pursue!
- ‘ I would lose all myself, and mix with
‘ you:
- ‘ Involv’d,— embody’d, with your beau-
‘ ties join,
- ‘ As fires meet fires, and mingle in their
‘ shine;
- ‘ Absorb’d in bliss, I would dissolving lie,
- ‘ Become all you, and soul and body die.
- ‘ Weigh well these symptoms, and then
‘ judge, in part,
- ‘ The poignant anguish of the bleeding
‘ heart.
- ‘ Of him, who is, with unutterable love,
‘ Resplendent charmer,
- ‘ Your hoping,— fearing, languish-
‘ ing adorer,

‘ F. FINEER,

‘ P.S.

' P.S. I propose flying to the feet of my
' adorable about five o'clock this af-
' ternoon ; — do not, I beseech you,
' clip the wings of my devotion, by
' forbidding my approach.'

How acceptable to a vain mind, is even the meanest testimony of admiration ! — If miss Betsy was not charmed with the elegance of this offering, she was, at least, very well pleased with the pains he took in composing it. — In the humour she then was, she would perhaps have rewarded the labour of his brain, with giving him an opportunity of kissing her shoe a second time, but she expected her brother Frank about the hour he mentioned, with some intelligence of mr. Trueworth, and had engaged to pass the evening abroad, as has been already mentioned.

She sent, however, a very complaisant message by the servant, who brought the letter ; — she ordered he should come up into her dining-room, and then, with a great deal of sweetness, desired him to tell his master, that she was under a necessity of spending the whole day with some relations that were just come to town, therefore intreated he would defer the

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the honour he intended her, 'till some
other time.

Mr. Francis Thoughtless did indeed call upon her, as she imagined he would ; — he had been at the lodgings of mr. Trueworth, but that gentleman happened to be abroad at the time he went, and he was now obliged to go with his brother on some business relating to the commission he was about to purchase, so could not stay long enough with her to enter into any conversation of moment.

Miss Betsy had now full two hours upon her hands after her brother left her, to which she had appointed mr. Munden to come to conduct her to the country-dancing, and as she had not seen miss Mabel for a good while, and had heard that lady had made her several visits when she was not at home to receive them, she thought to take this opportunity of having nothing else to do, to return part of the debt, which civility demanded from her to her friend.—Accordingly she set out in a hackney coach, but met with an accident by the way, which not only disappointed her intentions, but likewise struck a strange damp on the gaiety of her spirits.

As they were driving pretty fast thro' a narrow street, a gentleman's chariot run full against them, with such rapidity, that both received a very great shock, insomuch that the wheels were locked, and it was not without some difficulty, and the assistance of several people, who seeing what had happened ran out of their shops and houses, that the coachmen were able to keep their horses from going on; which had they done, both the machines must inevitably have been torn to pieces: — there were two gentlemen in the chariot, who immediately jumped out; — miss Betsy screaming, and frightened almost to death, was also helped out of the coach by a very civil tradesman, before whose door the accident had happened; — he led her into his shop, and made her sit down, while his wife ran to fetch a glass of water, and some hartshorn drops.

Her extreme terror had hindered her from discovering who was in the chariot, or whether any one was there, but the gentlemen having crossed the way, and come into the same shop, she presently knew the one to be sir Bazil Loveit, and the other mr. Trueworth; — her surprize at sight of the latter was such as might have

have occasioned some raillery, if it had not been concealed under that which she had sustained before : — sir Bazil approached her with a very respectful bow, and made a handsome apology for the fault his man had committed, in not giving way when a lady was in the coach ; to which she modestly replied, that there could be no fault where there was no design of offending. — Mr. Trueworth then drawing near, with a very cold and reserved air told her, he hoped she would receive no prejudice by the accident.

‘ I believe the danger is now over,’ said she, struck to the very heart at finding herself accosted by him in a manner so widely different from that to which she had been accustomed : — scarce had she the fortitude to bear the shock it gave her ; but summoning to her aid all that pride and disdain could supply her with, to prevent him from perceiving how much she was affected by his behaviour : — ‘ I could not, however,’ pursued she, with a tone of voice perfectly ironical, ‘ have expected to receive any consolation under this little disaster from mr. Trueworth ; — I imagined, sir, that some weeks ago you had been reposing yourself in the delightful bowers, and sweet recesses

Miss Betsy Thoughtless. 49

' recesses of your country seat. — How often have I heard you repeat with pleasure these lines of mr. Addison's ?

" Bear me, ye gods ! to Umbria's gentle
" seats,

" Or hide me in sweet Bayia's soft re-
" treats.

' Yet still I find you in this noisy,
' bustling town. — She concluded these words with a forced smile ; which mr. Truworth taking no notice of, replied, with the same gravity as before, ' I pur-
' posed indeed, madam, to have returned
' to Oxfordshire, but events then unfore-
' seen have detained me.'

While they were speaking, sir Bazil recollecting the face of miss Betsy, which till now he had not done, cried, ' I think, ma-
' dam, I have had the honour of seeing you
' before this.' — ' Yes, sir Bazil,' replied she, knowing very well he meant at miss Forward's, ' you saw me once in a
' place, where neither you, nor any one
' else, will ever see me again, but I did
' not then know the character of the per-
' son I visited : ' To which sir Bazil only replying, that he believed she did not, mr. Truworth immediately rejoined,

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that the most cautious might be *once* de-
ceived.

The emphasis with which he uttered the word *once*, made miss Betsy see, that he bore still in mind the second error she had been guilty of, in visiting that woman ; but she had no time to give any other answer than a look of scorn and indignation, sir Bazil's footman telling him, the chariot was now at liberty, and had received no damage ; on which the gentlemen took their leave of her, mr. Trueworth shewing no more concern in doing so, than sir Bazil himself, or any one would have done, who never had more than a mere cursory acquaintance with her.

She would not be perswaded to go into the coach again, much less could she think of going on her intended visit, but desired a chair to be called, and went directly home, in order to give vent to those emotions, which may easier be conceived, than represented.



CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Seems to be calculated rather for the instruction than entertainment of the reader.

HOW great soever was the shock miss Betsy had sustained in this interview with mr. Trueworth, neither did he think himself much indebted to fortune, for having thrown her in his way ; — he had once loved her to a very high degree, and though the belief of her unworthiness, — the fond endearments of one woman, — and the real merits of another, had all contributed to drive that passion from his breast, yet as a wound but lately closed is apt to bleed afresh, on every little accident, so there required no less than the whole stock of the beautiful and discreet miss Harriot's perfections, to defend his heart from feeling anew some part of its former pain, on this sudden and unexpected attack.

Happy was it for him, that his judgment concurred with his present inclination, and that he had such unquestionable motives for justifying the transition he had

made of his affections from one obj another, else might he have relapsed a flame, which, if ever it had bee tended with any true felicity, must been purchased at the expence of a finity of previous disquiets.

He was now become extremely versant with the family of sir Baz visited there almost every day, — well received by both the sisters, and many opportunities of penetrating the real sentiments and dispositio miss Harriot, which he found to be as his most sanguine wishes could formed for the woman to be blest whom he would make choice of wife. — When he compared the temper, — the affability, — the easly affected chearfulness, mixed with coming reserve, which that young testified in all her words and ac with the capricious turns, — the pric the giddy lightness he had observ the behaviour of miss Betsy, his ad tion of the one was increased by hi approbation of the other.

How great a pity was it, then that a young lady, like miss Bef formed by heaven and nature to rendered any man compleatly hap pos

possessing her, inferior to her fair competitor; neither in wit, beauty, or any personal, or acquired endowment, — her inclinations no less pure, — her sentiments as noble, — her disposition equally generous and benign, should, through her own inadvertency, destroy all the merit of so many amiable qualities, and for the sake of indulging the wanton vanity of attracting universal admiration, forfeit, in reality, those just pretensions to it, which otherwise she had been entitled from the deserving and discerning few!

Mr. Træwworth, as the reader may have observed, did not all at once withdraw his affections from the first object of them, nor transmit them to a second, but on very justifiable motives. — The levity of miss Betsy, and other branches of ill conduct, had very much weaned her from his heart, before the wicked artifices of miss Flora had rendered her quite contemptible in his opinion, and had not wholly devoted himself to the beauties of miss Harriot, till he was well convinced the perfections of her mind were such as could not fail of securing the conquest ~~which~~ her eyes had gained.

He did not however presently declare himself, as he saw the friendship between

the two sisters would be somewhat of an obstacle to his hopes ; — he had heard that miss Harriot had rejected several advantageous proposals of marriage, merely because she would not be separated from mrs. Wellair ; — he also found, that sir Bazil, though for what reason he could not guess, seemed not very desirous of having his sister disposed of : — the only probable way, therefore, he thought of obtaining his wishes, was to conceal them, 'till he found the means of insinuating himself so far into the good graces, both of the one and the other, as to prevent them from opposing whatever endeavours he should make to engage their sister to listen to his suit.

The stratagem had all the effect for which it was put in practice : — the intimacy he had long ago contracted with sir Bazil, now grew into so perfect a friendship, that he scarce suffered a day to pass without an invitation to his house. — Mrs. Wellair expressed the highest esteem and liking of his conversation, and miss Harriot herself, not imagining of what consequence every word that fell from her was to him, said a thousand obliging things on his account, particularly one day, after they had been singing a two-part song together, ‘ How often cried

cried she to her sister, ‘ shall we wish for
‘ this gentleman, when we get into the
‘ country, to act the principal part in
‘ our little operas ! ’

All this he returned in no other manner, than any man would have done, who had no farther aim than to shew his wit and gallantry : — so much of his happiness, indeed, depended upon the event, that it behoved him to be very cautious how he proceeded ; and it is likely he would not have ventured to throw off the mask of indifference so soon as he did, if he had not been emboldened to it by an unexpected accident.

Among the number of those, who visited the sisters of sir Bazil, there was a young lady called mrs. Blanchfield ; — she was born in the same town with them, but had been some time in London, on account of the death of an uncle, who had left her a large fortune ; — she had a great deal of vivacity and good humour, which rendered both her person and conversation very agreeable ; — she passed in the eyes of most people for a beauty, but her charms were little taken notice of by mrs. Trueworth, though she behaved towards him in a manner, which would have been flattering enough to a man of

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more vanity, or who had been less engrossed by the perfections of another.

By what odd means does Fortune sometimes bring about those things she is determined to accomplish? — Who could have thought this lady, with whom Mr. Trueworth had no manner of concern, and but a slight acquaintance, should even, unknowing it herself, become the happy instrument of having that done for him, which he knew not very well how to contrive for himself; — yet so it proved, in effect, as the reader will presently perceive.

Happening to call one morning on Sir Bazil while he was dressing, ‘O! Trueworth,’ said he, ‘I am glad you have prevented me; for I was just going to your lodgings: — I have something to acquaint you with, which I fancy you will think deserves your attention. — I suppose,’ replied Mr. Trueworth, ‘you would not tell me any thing, that was not really so; — but pray what is it?’

‘Why you have made a conquest here it seems,’ resumed Sir Bazil, ‘and may say with Cæsar, ‘Veni, Vidi, Vici.’ — — Prithee how did you sleep last night? — Did

— Did your guardian angel, or no kind tatling star, give you notice of your approaching happiness, that you might receive the blessing with moderation? — Mr. Truworth, not able to conceive what it was he meant, but imagining there was some mystery contained in this raillery, desired him to explain; ‘ for,’ said he, ‘ the happiness you promise cannot come too soon.’

‘ You will think so’ replied sir Bazil, ‘ when I tell you, a fine lady, — a celebrated toast, and a fortune of twenty thousand pounds in her own hands, is fallen in love with you.’ — ‘ With me?’ cried mr. Trueworth, ‘ you are merry this morning, sir Bazil.’ — ‘ No faith, I am serious,’ resumed the other; ‘ the lady I speak of is mrs. Blanchfield: — I have heard her say abundance of hand-some things of you myself, — such as, that you were a very fine gentleman, — that you had a great deal of wit, — sung well; — but my sisters tell me, that when she is alone with them, she asks a thousand questions about you, and in fine talks of nothing else; — so that, according to this account, a very little courtship would serve to make you master both of her person and fortune. What say you?’

‘ That I am neither vain enough to believe,’ answered mr. Truworth, ‘ nor ambitious enough to desire such a thing should be real.’ — ‘ How!’ — cried sir Bazil, in some surprise; — ‘ why she is reckoned one of the finest women in town; — has wit, — good nature, — is of a good family, and an unblemished reputation; — then her fortune, — though I know your estate sets you above wanting a fortune with a wife, yet I must tell you a fortune is a very pretty thing, — children may come, and a younger brood must be provided for.’

‘ You argue very reasonably indeed,’ replied mr. Truworth; ‘ but pray,’ pursued he, ‘ as you are so sensible of this lady’s perfections, how happened it, that you never made your addresses to her yourself?’ — ‘ I was not sure she would like me so well as she does you,’ said he; ‘ besides, to let you into the secret, my heart was engaged before I ever saw her face, and my person had been so too by this time, but for an unlucky rub in my way.’

‘ What! sir Bazil, honourably in love,’ cried mr. Truworth. — ‘ Aye, Charles,

‘ then

' there is no resisting destiny,' answered he ; — ' I that have ranged through half the sex in search of pleasure, — doated on the beauty of one, — the wit of another, — admired by turns their different charms, have at last found one in whom all I could wish in woman is compriz'd ; and to whom I am unalterably fixed, beyond even, I think, a possibility of change.'

' May I be trusted with the name of this admirable person,' said mr. Trueworth, ' and what impedes your happiness ?' — ' You shall know all,' replied sir Bazil ; — ' in the first place, she is called miss Mabel.' — ' What ! miss Mabel of Bury-street,' cried mr. Trueworth, hastily ?' — ' The same,' replied sir Bazil : — ' you know her then ?' — ' I have seen her,' said mr. Trueworth, ' in company with a lady I visited some time ago, and believe she is, in reality, the original of that amiable picture you have been drawing.'

' It rejoices me, however, that you approve my choice,' said sir Bazil ; ' but her father is, without exception, the most sordid, avaritious wretch breathing ; — he takes more pleasure in counting over his bags, than in the happiness

‘ pines of an only child ; — he seems
‘ glad of an alliance with me, — en-
‘ courages my pretensions to his daugh-
‘ ter, — is ready to give her to me to-
‘ morrow if I please ; yet refuses to part
‘ with a single shilling for her portion,
‘ till he can no longer keep it ; —
‘ that is, he will secure to me ten thou-
‘ sand pounds after his decease ; and adds,
‘ by way of cajole, that, perhaps, he
‘ will then throw in a better penny ; but
‘ is positively determined to make no di-
‘ minution of his substance, while he
‘ lives. — These,’ continued he, ‘ are the
‘ only terms on which he will give his
‘ consent, and this it is, which has so
‘ long delayed my marriage.’

Mr. Truworth could not here forbear making some reflections on the cruelty and injustice of those parents, who rather than divide any part of their treasures with their children, suffer them to let slip the only crisis that could make their happiness. — After which, sir Bazil went on in his discourse.

‘ It is not,’ said he, ‘ that I would not
‘ gladly accept my charming girl on the
‘ conditions the old miser offers, or even
‘ without any future hopes of what he
‘ promises to do for her ; but I am so
‘ un-

' unhappily circumstanced as to be under
' a necessity of having ready money with
' a wife : — old sir Bazil, my father,
' gave my elder sister six thousand pounds
' on her marriage with mr. Wellair, and,
' I suppose to shew his affection to both
' his daughters was equal; bequeathed at
' his death the same sum to Harriot, and
' this to be charged on the estate, not-
' notwithstanding it was then under some
' other incumbrances : — she can make
' her demand, either on coming of age,
' or on the day of marriage, which ever
' happens first ; the one indeed is three
' years distant, she being but eighteen,
' but who knows how soon the other
' may happen ? — 'Tis true, she seems
' at present quite averse to changing her
' condition ; but that is not to be de-
' pended upon, — all young women are
' apt to talk in that strain ; but when
' once the favourite man comes in view,
' away at once with resolution and vir-
' ginity.'

Mr. Trueworth now ceased to wonder
at the little satisfaction sir Bazil had shewn,
on any discourse that casually happened
concerning love or marriage to miss Har-
riot ; and nothing could be more lucky
for him than this discovery of the cause,—
he found by it that one obstacle, at least, to
his

his hopes might easily be removed, and that it was in his own power to convert entirely to his interest, that which had seemed to threaten the greatest opposition to it.

A moment's consideration sufficed to make him know what he ought to do, and that a more favourable conjuncture could not possibly arrive, for his declaring the passion he had so long concealed : —
‘ Methinks, sir Bazil,’ said he, after a very short pause, ‘ there is not the least grounds for any apprehensions of the inconvenience you mention : — who-ever has in view the possession of miss Harriot, must certainly be too much taken up with his approaching happiness to think of any thing besides.’

‘ Ah friend,’ cried sir Bazil, ‘ you talk like one ignorant of the world.’ —
‘ I talk like one who truly loves,’ replied mr. Trueworth, ‘ and is not ignorant of the merit of her he loves ; — and now,’ continued he, perceiving sir Bazil looked a little surprised, ‘ I will exchange secrets with you, and for the one you have repos'd in me, will entrust you with another, which has never yet escaped my lips : — I love your charming sister ; — the first moment I beheld her

' her, made me her adorer; — her affability, — her modest sweetness, — her unaffected wit, — her prudence, — the thousand virtues of her mind have since confirmed the expressions that her beauty made, and I am now all her's.'

As sir Bazil had never discovered any thing in mr. Truworth's behaviour, that could give him the least cause to suspect what now he was so fully informed of by his own confession, he was very much astonished, ' Is it possible !' cried he, ' are you in earnest, and do you really love Harriot ?' — ' Yes, from my soul I do,' replied mr. Truworth, ' and wish no other blessing this side heaven than to obtain her: — as to the six thousand pound you speak of, I neither should demand, nor would accept it, 'till well assured the payment of it was quite agreeable to the situation of your affairs.'

' Would you then marry Harriot with nothing,' said sir Bazil, ' or what is tantamount to nothing, a small fortune, and that to be paid discretionary, rather than mrs. Blanchfield with twenty thousand pounds in ready specie ?' — ' Not only rather than mrs. Blanchfield,' replied mr. Truworth, ' but than any other

‘ other woman in the world, with all
‘ those thousands multiplied into millions.’

‘ Amazing love and generosity! ’ cried
sir Bazil with some vehemence ; — ‘ could
she be capable of refusing, she were un-
worthy of you ; — but this you may be
assured of, that if all the influence I
have over her can engage her to be
yours, she shall be so.’ — Mr. True-
worth could testify the transport this
promise gave him no otherwise than by
a warm embrace, saying, at the same
time, ‘ Dear, sir Bazil ! ’ — ‘ Yes,’ re-
joined that gentleman, ‘ to give my sister
such a husband as mr. Trueworth, I
would put myself to a much greater
inconvenience than the prompt pay-
ment of her fortune, and shall not abuse
your generous offer by — ’ ‘ I will
not hear a word on that head,’ cried
mr. Trueworth, hastily interrupting him,
‘ and if you would add to the favours
you have already conferred upon me,
do not even think of it : — pursue your
inclinations with the deserving object
of them, and be as happy with her as
I hope to be through your friendly
assistance with the adorable miss Har-
riot.’

Here

Here ensued a little contest between them ; — sir Bazil was ashamed to accept that proof of friendship mr. Truworth proffered, but the many arguments he made use of, joined to the consideration of his own ease, at last prevailed ; after which sir Bazil told him, the ladies were gone to the shops, in order to make some purchases they wanted, but that he would take the first opportunity on their return, to acquaint his sister with the sentiments he had for her, and appointed to meet him at the chocolate-house in the evening, to let him know the success.

C H A P. VI.

Show the different operations of the same passion, in persons of different principles and dispositions.

SIR Bazil had very much at heart the accomplishment of the promise he had made to mr. Truworth, and indeed no one thing could have seemed more strange than that of his being otherwise, when so many reasons concurred to engage his integrity : — he had a real friend-

ship for the person, who desired his assistance, there were none among all his acquaintance for whom he had a greater regard, or who shared more of his good wishes ; — the natural affection he had for his sister made him rejoice in the opportunity of seeing her so happily disposed of, and the particular interest of his own passion, might well render him not only sincere, but also zealous in promoting an affair, which would so fully answer all these ends.

The first breaking the matter to miss Harriot he looked upon as the greatest difficulty ; for he doubted not but when once a belief of mr. Trueworth's inclinations was properly inculcated in her, his amiable person, and fine qualities, would enable him to make his way, as a lover, into a heart, which had already a high esteem for him as an acquaintance.

He resolved, however, not to delay making the discovery, and his sisters coming home soon after, he ran out of his dressing-room, and met them as they were going up stairs into their own chamber, with a whole cargo of silks, and other things they had been buying : — ‘ Hold, hold,’ cried he, not suffering them to pass, ‘ pray come in here, and let

'let me see what bargains you have been making?' — 'What understanding can you, that are a bachelor, have in these things?' said mrs. Wellair, laughing. — 'I have the more need then of being informed,' replied he, 'that I may be the better able to judge both of the fancy and frugality of my wife, whenever I am so happy to get one.'

'Well, well, I know all you men must be humoured,' said mrs. Wellair, in the same gay strain: — 'come, sister, let us unpack our bundles.' — With these words they both went in, and the servant who followed them with the things, having laid them down on a table, withdrew.

The ladies then began to open their parcels, and sir Bazil gave his opinion first of one thing, and then of another, as they were shewn to him, 'till miss Harriot displaying a roll of very rich white damask, 'to which of you does this belong?' said sir Bazil. — 'To me,' answered she. — 'Hah! — I am glad on it, upon my soul,' rejoined he: — 'this is an omen of marriage, my dear sister: — I will lay my life upon it, that you become a bride in this gown.' — 'I must first find the man to make me so,' cried

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cried she briskly. — ‘ He is not very far
‘ to seek, I dare answer,’ said sir Bazil.
— ‘ Why then,’ replied she, ‘ when he
‘ is found, he must wait till my mind
‘ comes to me, and that, I believe, will
‘ not be in the wearing of this gown.’

‘ I am of a different way of thinking,’
said he, somewhat more gravely than be-
fore; — ‘ what would you say if I should
‘ tell you, that one of the finest, most
‘ accomplished men in Europe is fallen
‘ desperately in love with you, and has
‘ engaged me to be his intercessor?’ — ‘ I
‘ should say nothing,’ answered she, ‘ but
‘ that you have a mind to divert yourselves,
‘ and put me out of humour with my
‘ new gown, by your converting it into
‘ a hyeroglyphic. — In speaking these
words she catched up her silk, and ran
hastily up stairs, leaving mrs. Wellair
and her brother together.

‘ Poor Harriot,’ said sir Bazil, after
she was gone, ‘ I have put her to the
‘ blush with the very name of mar-
‘ mony; — but I assure you, sister,’ con-
tinued he to mrs. Wellair, ‘ the thing I
‘ have mentioned is serious.’ — ‘ Indeed?’
cried that lady in some surprise. — ‘ Yes
‘ upon my honour,’ resumed he, ‘ the
‘ gentleman I mean had not left me above

' a quarter of an hour before you came in, and I can tell you is one whom you know,' — ' If I know him,' replied she, after a pause, ' I fancy I need not be at any loss to guess his name, by the description you have given me of him; for I have seen no man since my coming to town, who so well deserves those encomiums as Mr. Trueworth.' — ' I am glad you think so,' said Sir Bazil; ' for I am certain your judgment will go a great way with Miss Harriot; — he is, in fact, the person I have been speaking of, and is so every way deserving of my sister's affection, that she must not only be the most insensible creature in the world, but also the greatest enemy to her own interest and happiness, to refuse him.'

He then repeated to her all the conversation he had had that morning with Mr. Trueworth, the answers that gentleman had given him to the proposition he had made on Mrs. Blanchfield's account; — his declaration of his passion for Miss Harriot; and every other particular, excepting that of the non-payment of her fortune; and that he concealed only because he would not be suspected to have been swindled by it, to say more of his friend than he really merited.

Mrs.

Mrs. Wellair was equally charmed and astonished at this report, and on sir Bazil's telling her, that mr. Trueworth was under some apprehensions, that the pleasure she took in having her sister with her, would be an impediment to his desires, she very gravely replied, that she was very sorry mr. Trueworth should imagine, she was so wanting in understanding, or true affection to her sister, as for the self-satisfaction of her company, to offer any thing in opposition to her interest or happiness.

After this they had a good deal of discourse together, concerning mr. Trueworth's family and fortune, the particulars of both which sir Bazil was very well acquainted with, and mrs. Wellair being thoroughly convinced by what he said of the many advantages of the alliance proposed, assured him, in the strongest terms she was able, that she would do every thing in her power to promote it.

' I'll entertain her on this subject while we are dressing,' said she; — ' your pleasantry on the white damask will furnish me with an excellent pretence; — I shall begin in the same strain you did, and then proceed to a serious narrative of all you have been telling me, relat-

‘ in

‘ ing to mr. Trueworth ; to which I shall add my own sentiments of the amiableness of his person, parts, and accomplishments, and set before her eyes, in the light it deserves, the generosity of his passion, in refusing so great a fortune as mrs. Blanchfield for her sake, and the respectfulness of it, in not daring to declare himself, till he had engaged the only two, who may be supposed to have any influence over her, in favour of his fuit.’

‘ I know,’ said sir Bazil, ‘ that you women are the fittest to deal with one another, — therefore, as I see you are hearty in the cause, shall wholly depend on your management ; — but hearkye, sister,’ continued he, perceiving she was going out of the room, ‘ I have one thing to add, — I am to meet Trueworth at the chocolate-house this evening ; — he will be impatient for the success of the promise I have made him ; — now you know we shall have a great deal of company at dinner to day, and I may not have an opportunity of speaking to you in private before the time of my going to him ; — for that reason we must have some watch word between us, that may give an intimation

'tion in general, how Harriot receives what you have said to her.'

'Oh, that is easy,' cried mrs. Wellair, 'as thus,—you shall take an occasion, either at table, or any time when you find it most proper, to ask me, how I do? and by my answer to that question, you will be able to judge what success I have had.' — 'Very right,' replied sir Bazil, 'and I will be sure to observe.' — There passed no more between them, she went directly up stairs to do as she had said, and sir Bazil to pay his morning visit to miss Mabel, as he usually did every day.

The humours of these two worthy persons, were extremely well adapted to make each other happy: — sir Bazil was gay, but he was perfectly sincere; — miss Mabel had a great deal of softness in her nature, but it was entirely under the direction of her prudence; — she returned the passion of her lover with equal tenderness, yet would not permit the gratification of it, till every thing that threatened an interruption of their mutual ease should be removed. — Sir Bazil made no secret of his affairs to her; — she knew very well, that he desired no more at present of her father than the

six thousand pounds, charged on his estate for miss Harriot's fortune, and as the old gentleman testified the highest esteem for him, and satisfaction in the proposed match, she flattered herself, that he would at last consent to so reasonable a request, but, till he did so, remained firm in her resolution of denying both her own, and lover's wishes.

The pleasure with which they always saw each other, was now however greatly enhanced by his acquainting her with the almost assured hope he had, that the difficulty, which had so long kept them asunder, would be soon got over, and he should have the inexpressible satisfaction of complying with the conditions her father had proposed, without the least danger of incurring any inconvenience to himself.

The clock striking two, he was obliged to leave her, and go home to receive the company he expected; — he behaved among his friends with his accustomed vivacity, but casting his eyes frequently towards miss Harriot, he imagined he saw certain gloom upon her countenance which made him fearful for the success of Mrs. Wellair's solicitations, till the agreement between him and

and that lady, he cried out hastily to her, ‘ How do you do, sister ? ’ To which she answered, with a smile, ‘ As well as can be expected, brother ; ’ — and then to prevent miss Harriot, or any one else from wondering what she meant by so odd a reply, added, ‘ after the ugly jolt I have had this morning over London stones in a hackney coach.’

Sir Bazil easily understood, that by the words, ‘ As well as can be expected,’ his sister meant as much as could be hoped for, from the first attack on a maid so young and innocent, as miss Harriot, and doubted not but that so favourable a beginning would have as fortunate a conclusion.

Those guests who had dined with him, stayed supper also, but that did not hinder him from fulfilling his engagement with mr. Truworth ; — he begged they would excuse a short excursion, which he said he was obliged to make, on extraordinary business, and accordingly went at the time appointed for the meeting that gentleman.

Mr. Truworth received the intelligence he brought him, with transports besetting the sincerity of his passion ;

thought he had little to apprehend, since mrs. Wellair vouchsafed to become his advocate. — ‘ It is certainly,’ said sir Basil, ‘ greatly in her power to forward the completion of your wishes, as it was to have obstructed them ; — but, my dear friend,’ continued he, ‘ there is no time to be lost : — the business that brought my sisters to town will soon be over, and mrs. Wellair will then be on the wing to get home to her husband and family ; — you must dine with me to-morrow ; — I shall be able by that time to learn the particulars of Harriot’s behaviour, on her first hearing an account of the affection with which you honour her, and by that you may the better judge how to proceed.’ — This was the substance of all the discourse they had together at that time ; — sir Basil went home, and mr. Trueworth adjourned to a coffee-house, where he met with something not very pleasing to him. — It was a letter from miss Flora, containing these lines :

To CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

My dear Trueworth,

FOR such you still are, and ever must be, to my fond doating heart, though so much cause to fear you cease

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“ to wish it ; — else why this cruel absence ? — I have not seen you these three days ! — an age to one that loves like me. — I am racked to death with the apprehensions of the motives of so unexpected a neglect ; — if my person or passion were unworthy your regard, why did you accept them with such enchanting softness ? — and if I ever had any place in your affection, what have I done to forfeit it ? — But sure you cannot think of abandoning me ! — of leaving me to all the horrors of despair and shame ! — No, — tis impossible, — ingratitude consists not with that strict honour you pretend to, and that I still flatter myself you are in reality possessed of : — you may have had some business, — but how poor a thing is business when compared with love ! — And I may reply with our English Sappho, in one of her amorous epistles,

“ Business you feign, but did you love like me,

“ I should your most important business be.”

“ But whither does my hurying spirit transport me ? — If I am still so happy to retain any share of your heart, have said too much ; if I am not, then

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 77

' can say will be ineffectual to move you.— I shall, therefore, only tell you, that
' I can live no longer without seeing you,
' and will call on you at the coffee-house
' this evening about eight, till when I
' am,

' Though in the utmost distraction,

' My dear, dear Trueworth,

' Your passionately tender,

' And devoted servant,

' F. MELLASIN.

' P.S. Having heard you say letters were
' left for you at this place, and that you
' stepped in once or twice every day,
' I thought it more proper to direct
' for you here, than at your own lodg-
' ings.— Once more adieu.— Do not
' fail to meet me at the hour,

Scarce could the ghost of a forsaken
mistress, drawing his curtains at the dead
of night, have shocked Mr. Trueworth
more than this epistle; — he had indeed
no more than any man, of his age
constitution, would have done, if
put in the manner he had been, yet
reproached himself severely for it: —
how little this unhappy creature
was in subjection, and tho'
he ever had for her was

now swallowed up in his honourable affections for miss Harriot, yet he was too humane and too generous not to pity the extravagance of a flame he was no longer capable of returning ; — he wanted her to know there was a necessity for their parting, but knew not how to do it without driving her to extremes : — he hated all kind of dissimulation, and as neither his honour, nor his inclination, would permit him to continue an amorous correspondence with her, he was very much at a loss how to put an end to it, without letting her into the real cause, which as yet he thought highly improper to do.

It cost him some time in debating within himself how he should behave, in an affair which was indeed, in the present situation of his heart, pretty perplexing ; — he considered miss Flora as a woman of condition, — as one who tenderly loved him, and as one, who, on both these accounts, it would not become him to affront ; — he reflected also, that a woman who had broke through all the rules of virtue, modesty, and even common decency for the gratification of her wild desires, might, when denied that gratification, be capable of taking such a character, but with it so

might ruin him with miss Harriot ; — he found it therefore highly necessary to disguise his sentiments, and act towards her in such a manner as should wean her affections from him by degrees, without his seeming to intend, or wish for such an event.

He had but just come to this determination when he was told from the bar, that a lady in a hackney coach desired to speak with him ; — he went directly to her, but instead of ordering the man to drive to any particular house, bid him drive as slowly as he could round St. James's Square.

This very much startling her, she asked him what he meant ? — ‘ Are all the houses of entertainment in the town,’ said she, ‘ shut up, that we must talk to one another in the street ? ’ — ‘ It is impossible for me, madam,’ answered he, ‘ to have the pleasure of your company this evening, — I am engaged with some gentlemen at the house where you found me, and have given my promise to return in ten minutes.’ — These words, in the reserved tone in which he spoke, stabbed her to the heart, — ‘ Ungracious man ! ’ cried she, ‘ is it thus that you, the most tender and ardent

‘ passion that ever was?’ — ‘ You ladies,’ said he, ‘ when once you give way to the soft impulse, are apt to devote yourselves too much to it; but men have a thousand other amusements, which all claim a share in the variegated scenes of life; — I am sorry, therefore, to find you disquieted in the manner your letter intimates. — Love should be nursed by laughing, ease, and joy; four discontent, reproaches, and complaints, deform its native beauty, and render that a curse, which otherwise would be the greatest of our blessings. — I beg you, therefore, continued he, with somewhat more softness in his voice, for your own sake, to moderate this vehemence; — be assured I will see you as often as possible, and shall always think of you with the regard I ought to do.’

Perceiving she was in very great agonies, he threw his arms about her waist, and gave her a very affectionate salute, which, though no more than what a brother might have offered to a sister, a little mitigated the force of her grief: — ‘ I see I am undone,’ cried she; — ‘ I have lost your heart, and am the most wretched creature upon earth!’ — ‘ Do not say so,’ replied he; — ‘ I never can be ungrateful for the favours you have bestowed.

' bestowed upon me; but discretion ought
' to be observed in an amour such as
' our's: — I have really some affairs upon
' my hands, which for a time will very
' much engross me, — make yourself easy
' then, — resume that gaiety, which ren-
ders you so agreeable to the world, and
' depend upon it, that to make me happy
' you must be so yourself.' — ' When,
' then shall I see you,' cried she, still
weeping and hanging on his breast? —
' As soon as convenience permits I will
' send to you,' said he, ' but there is a
necessity for my leaving you at present.'

He then called to the coachman to drive back to the house where he had taken him up. — It is not to be doubted but she made use of all the rhetoric of desperate dying love, and every other art she was mistress of, to engage him to prefix some time for their meeting; but he would not suffer himself to be prevailed upon so far, and he left her with no other consolation than a second embrace, little warmer than the former had been, and a repetition of the promise he had made of writing to her in a short time.

C H A P. VII.

May be called an appendix to the former, as it contains only some passages subsequent to the preceding occurrences.

WHAT pain soever the good nature and generosity of Mr. Trueworth had made him suffer, at sight of the unfortunate Miss Flora's distress, it was dispated by recalling to his mind the pleasing idea Sir Bazil had inspired in him, of succeeding in his wishes with the amiable Miss Harriot.

What sleep he had that night, doubtless, presented him with nothing but the delightful images of approaching joys, and, possibly, might give him some intimation of what was in those moments doing for him, by those who were watching for his interest.

Mrs. Wellair, who was extremely cautious how she undertook any thing, without being fully convinced it was right, and no less industrious in accomplish-

whatever she had once undertook, had employed all the time she had, with her sister before dinner, in representing to her, in the most pathetic terms, the passion Mr. Trueworth had for her, — the extraordinary merits he was possessed of, and the many advantages of an alliance with him ; but Miss Harriot was modest to that excess, that to be told, though from the mouth of a sister, she had inspired any inclinations of the sort she mentioned, gave her the utmost confusion ; — she had not considered the differences of sexes, and could not hear that any thing in her had reminded others of it, without blushing : — the effects of her beauty gave her rather a painful than a pleasing sensation, and she was ready to die with shame at what the most part of women are studious to acquire, and look on as their greatest glory.

She offered nothing, however, in opposition to what Mrs. Wellair had said, concerning the person, or amiable qualities of Mr. Trueworth ; neither indeed had she a will to do it ; — she had been always highly pleased with his conversation, and had treated him with the same innocent freedom she did her brother, and now afraid, that it was her behaviour to him in this manner, that had

encouraged him to think of making his addresses to her as a lover ; — she looked back with regret on every little mark of favour she had shewn him, lest he should have construed them into a meaning, which was far distant from her thoughts ; and these reflections it was, that occasioned that unusual pensiveness, which sir Bazil had observed in her at dinner, and which had given him some apprehensions proceeded from a cause less favourable to his friend.

Mrs. Wellair was not at all discouraged by the manner in which her sister had listened to this overture ; — she knew that several proposals of the same nature had been made to her in the country, all which she had rejected, and rejected with a disdain : — a certain air of abhorrence, widely different to what she testified on account of mr Trueworth ; and this prudent lady rightly judged, that he had little else to combat with, than the over-bashfulness of his mistress.

At night, on going to bed, she renewed the discourse, and pursued the theme she had began, with such success, that she brought miss Harriot to confess, she believed there was no man more deserving to be loved than mr. Trueworth ; but,

“but, my dear sister,” said she, “I have no inclination to marry, nor to leave you; I am quite happy as I am, and desire to be no more so:” to which the other replied, that was childish talking,—that she would, doubtless, marry some time or other,—that she might, perhaps, never have so good an offer, and could not possibly have a better, therefore advised her, not to slip the present opportunity, “but whenever Mr. True-worth should make a declaration of his passion to herself, to receive it in such a manner, as should not give him any room to imagine she was utterly averse to his pretensions.”

Miss Harriot suffered her to urge her on this point for a considerable time, but at last replied, in a low and hesitating voice, that she would be guided by her friends, who she was perfectly convinced had her interest at heart, and knew much better than herself what conduct she ought to observe; to which Mrs. Wellair replied, that she doubted not but the end would abundantly justify the advice had been given her.

The first thing this lady did in the morning, was to go to her brother’s chamber, and acquaint him with all that had

had passed between herself and miss Harriot ; after which they agreed together, that mr. Truworth should have an opportunity that very day, of making his addresses to her.

Though sir Bazil thought it needless to add any thing to what was already done, yet he could not forbear taking an occasion, when they were at breakfast, to mention mr. Truworth's name, and the many good qualities he was possessed of. — Mrs. Wellair joined in the praises her brother gave him, but miss Harriot spoke not a word : — on which, ‘ Are you not of our opinion, sister ?’ cried he to her. — ‘ Yes, brother,’ answered she, ‘ mr. Truworth is certainly a very fine gentleman.’ — ‘ How cold is such an expression,’ resumed sir Bazil, ‘ and even that extorted ?’ — ‘ You would not sure, sir,’ said she, a little gaily, ‘ have me in raptures about him, and speak as if I were in love with him ?’

‘ Indeed but I would,’ cried sir Bazil ; ‘ and, what is more, would also have you be so ; — he deserves it from you, and as you must some time or other be sensible of the tender passion, you cannot do it at more suitable years. —

• I see no necessity,' replied she, ' for my being so fat any years.'

• It is a sign then,' said he, ' that you have not consulted nature; — have you never read what lord Lansdown has wrote upon this subject? — if you have not, I will repeat it to you,

“ In vain from fate we strive to fly,
“ For first or last, as all must die,
“ So 'tis decreed by those above,
“ That first or last, we all must love.”

• Poets are not always prophets,' answered she, laughing. — ' It depends upon mr. Trueworth himself,' said sir Bazil, ' to prevent you from giving the lie to the prediction; — if he fails, I shall believe no other man in the world will ever have the power to engage you to fulfil it; — he dines here to day; — after Wellair and I are obliged to go abroad in the afternoon, so must desire you to make tea, and entertain him as well as you can, 'till we come back.'

• I see you are both in the plot against me,' cried she; ' but I shall endeavour to behave so as not to affront your good, yet at the same time be far from doing good your oracle.'

A gen-

A gentleman coming in to sir Basil, broke off their discourse, and relieved miss Harriot from any farther persecution at this time. — It was not that she disliked either the person or conversation of mr. Trueworth, — or that she was tired with the praises given him by her brother and sister ; — on the contrary, she found a thousand things, which they had not mentioned, to admire in him : — in fine, he was, in reality, less indifferent to her, than she herself imagined ; but there was a certain shyness in her disposition, which mingled some share of pain with the pleasure of hearing him spoke of as her lover.

She was sensible this propensity, which nature had implanted, was a weakness in her ; but though she used her utmost efforts for overcoming it, — she found herself unequal to the task : — in vain she considered, that the addresses of a man of such perfect honour and politeness, as mr. Trueworth, could not but be accompanied with the most profound respect : — in vain she called to mind the example of other ladies, whom she had seen behave in the company of those, who professed themselves their lovers, with the greatest ease and sprightliness, the very sight

sight of mr. Trueworth, as she saw him from her chamber window, talking with her brother in the garden, threw her heart into palpitations, which all the reason she was mistress of, could not enable her to quiet ; but when obliged to go down and sit with him at table, her confusion increased, by being more near the object which occasioned it ; — she endeavoured to treat him with the same freedom she had been accustomed, but it was not in her power : — in fine, never woman suffered more, in constraining herself to be silent and demure, than she did, in constraining herself to be talkative and gay.

What then became of her, when sir Basil and mrs. Wellair, after making a formal excuse for a short absence, went out, and left her exposed to the solicitations of a passion, which her timid modesty had made her so much dread ?

The moment mr. Trueworth saw himself alone with her, he approached her with the most tender and respectful air,
How often, madam, have I languished for an opportunity, such as this, telling you how much my soul adores you.— My dear friend, sir Basil, has told me he has prepared you to forgive

‘ give the boldness of my flame, and
‘ that for his sake you will vouchsafe to
‘ listen to my vows ; but it is from my-
‘ self alone you can be convinced of the
‘ ardency of the love you have inspired.’

My brother, sir,’ answered she, blushing, ‘ has indeed informed me, that
‘ I have obligations to you of a nature,
‘ which I was as far from expecting,
‘ as I am from deserving.’ — Here
mr. Trueworth began to run into some
praises on the charms which had subdued
his heart, which, though no more than
dictated by his real sentiments, seemed
to her too extravagant, and beyond what
her modesty would suffer her to endure :
‘ Hold, sir,’ cried she, interrupting him,
‘ if you would have me believe your pro-
fessions are sincere, forbear, I beseech
you, to talk to me in this manner : —
‘ it is an ill-judged policy, methinks, in
‘ you men, to idolize the women too
‘ much, you wish would think well of
‘ you ; — if our sex are in reality so vain
‘ as you generally represent us, on whom
‘ but yourselves can the fault be laid ? —
‘ And if we prove so weak as to imagine
‘ ourselves such, as either the flattery, or
‘ the partial affection of the lover paints
‘ us, we shall be apt to take every thing
‘ as our due, and think little gratitude
‘ is

“is owing; for the offering he makes us
“of his heart.”

Mr. Trueworth was perfectly ravished at hearing her speak thus, but durst not express himself with too much warmth on the occasion: — ‘It must be confessed, madam,’ replied he, ‘that the beauties of the person, when not accompanied by those of the mind, afford but a short liv’d triumph to the fair possessor; — they dazzle at first sight, and take the senses as it were by surprise; but the impression soon wears off, and the captivated heart regains its former liberty, — nay, perhaps, wonders at itself for having been enslaved: — whereas those darts, which fly from the perfections of the mind, penetrate into the soul, and fix a lasting empire there; — but when both these charms shall happen to be united, as in the lovely Harriot,’ continued he, taking one of her hands and kissing it; — ‘When in the most enchanting form that nature ever made, is found a soul enriched with every virtue, — every grace, — how indissoluble the chain! — how glorious the bond!

“We is a theme I have never made ready,” answered she; “but accord-
“ing

‘ ing to my notions of the matter, those gentlemen, who pretend to be affected by it, give themselves more trouble than they need; — as that passion is generally allowed rather to be the child of fancy, than of real merit in the object loved. I should think it would be sufficient for any man in his addresses to a lady, to tell her, that she happens to hit his taste, — that she is what he likes, without dressing her up in qualities, which, perhaps, have no existence but in his own imagination.’

‘ Where love is founded on beauty alone, as I have already said,’ resumed Mr. Trueworth, ‘ the instructions you give, madam, of the manner of declaring it, is certainly very just; for, indeed, no farther could be warranted by sincerity: — but where reason directs the lover’s choice, and points out those excellencies which alone can make him happy in the possession of his wishes, ideas more sublime will naturally arise, and we can never too much admire, or praise, what is immediately from the Divine Source of all perfection! — It is not, O charming Harriot!’ pursued he, looking on her with the utmost tenderness; — it is not those radiant eyes, — that lovely mouth, nor that sweet ma- jesty,

' jesty, that shines through all your air,
' but it is the heaven within that I adore ;
' — to that I pay my present worship,
' and on that build all my hopes of fu-
ture bliss !'

Miss Harriot was about to make some reply, but his looks, the vehemence with which he uttered these last words, and the passionate gesture which accompanied them, made her relapse into her former baseness, from which she had a little recovered herself, and again deprived her of the power of speech.

' You give up the point then my angel,' cried he, perceiving she was silent, ' and I am glad you do; for had you continued to prohibit my expatiating on these merits, which made me your adorer, I must have maintained the argument even against your lovely self, to whom I shall for ever yield in all things else.'

After this he fell, insensibly as it were, into some discourse concerning the divine ordinance of marriage, and then proceeded to give her the most amiable picture, that words could form of that state, when persons of virtue, honour, and good sense, were by love and law united, and found

found themselves equally bound by duty and inclination, to make each other's happiness.

There are some ladies, who listen very contentedly to the most warm and amorous addresses can be made to them, yet will not suffer the least word of marriage, till after a long and tedious preparation is made for a sound, which they pretend to think so dreadful. — These no doubt will say, that Mr. Trueworth went too far for a lover, on the first declaration of his passion; but he was emboldened to act in the manner he did, by the brother of his mistress, and had the satisfaction to perceive she was not offended at it; — she had a great share of solid understanding, — was an enemy to all sorts of affection, and as she knew the end proposed by his courtship was marriage, saw no reason why he should be fearful of mentioning it to her; and though her modesty would not permit her to take much part in a conversation of this nature, yet she was too artless, and indeed too sincere, to counterfeit a displeasure, which she did not feel.

C H A P. VIII.

Is more full of business than entertainment.

WHILE mr. Trueworth was thus prosecuting a suit, which every time he saw the lovely Harriot redoubled his impatience to accomplish, mr. Francis Thoughtless had been twice at his lodgings without finding him at home; but on that gentleman's leaving his name the second time, and saying, he would come again the next morning, the other thought himself under an indispensable necessity of staying to receive his visit,

The meeting of these two was extremely civil and polite, but far from that cordial familiarity which used to pass between them, especially on the side of mr. Francis. — After mr. Trueworth had congratulated him on the recovery of his health, and coming to town, they fell into some discourse on ordinary affairs, without the least mention of miss Betsy, by either party, for a considerable time, till her brother growing a little impatient, that the other should say nothing to him on an

an affair, in which he had made him his confidant, and which he had taken so much pains to forward, said to him, with an air partly gay, and partly serious, —

• I was surprised on my arrival to be told, that a passion so violent, as that you pretended for my sister, should all on a sudden vanish, and that a thing, which I once thought so near being concluded, was entirely broken off.'

• Things of that nature,' replied Mr. Trueworth, coldly, ' are never concluded till accomplished : — accidents sometimes intervene to separate persons, who have seemed most likely to be united for ever, which, indeed, never was the case between me and that lady.'

• Yet, sir,' rejoined the other, a little irritated at his manner of speaking, ' I think, that when a gentleman has made his addresses to a young lady of family and character, for any length of time, and in the public manner you did, some cause ought to be assigned for his deferting her.'

• I am under no obligation,' said Mr. Trueworth, very gloomily, ' to give an account of my behaviour to any one whatever; but in consideration of our friend

' friendship, and the love I once had for your sister, I shall make no scruple to tell you, that a woman of her humour would suit but ill with a man of mine; — as to any farther elucidement of this affair, it is from herself alone you must receive it.' — ' She shewed me a letter from you, sir,' cried Mr. Francis, hastily. — ' That might then suffice to inform you,' answered Mr. Trueworth, ' that in what I have done, I but obeyed the dictates of my honour.' — ' Honour!' cried the other, fiercely, and laying his hand upon his sword, ' What is it you mean, sir? Did honour oppose your marriage with my sister?'

' No menaces,' said Mr. Trueworth, with a gravity which was pretty near disarming, — ' you know me incapable of fear; — I have fought for your sister, but will never fight against her. — I injure not her reputation; — on the contrary, would defend it if unjustly attacked, even at the hazard of my life; but as to love or marriage, these are things well out of the question, — we both, perhaps, have other views, and the less said of what is past the better.'

Francis naturally took fire on the occasion of an indignity offered to

F him,

him; but when once convinced of his mistake, was no less ready to repent and acknowledge it; — he had seen many instances of the honour, generosity, and sincerity of Mr. Trueworth; he had also been witness of some of the levity and inconsiderateness of his sister, and the reflection of a moment served to make him see, that this change had happened merely through her own ill conduct.

His rage abated even while the other was speaking, but a deep concern remained behind, and throwing himself down in a chair, ‘ Into what vexations,’ cried he, ‘ may not a whole family be plunged, through the indiscretion of one woman?’

‘ Judge not too rashly,’ said Mr. Trueworth; — ‘ Miss Betsy may one day see a man so happy as to inspire her with sentiments far different from those she hitherto has entertained, and she also may be more happy herself, with a man who loves her with less delicacy than I did.’

The brother of Miss Betsy seemed not to take any notice of these words, but rising in some confusion; — ‘ Well, sir,’ said he, ‘ I shall trouble you no more upon this subject, — and am sorry

'have done it now.' — Mr. Trueworth then told him, that though the intended alliance between them was broke off, he saw no occasion that their friendship should be so too ; — that he should be glad of an opportunity to return the favours he had received from him, in relation to his sister, though his endeavours on that score had not met with the desired success ; and that he hoped they should not live as strangers while they continued in the same town : — to all this Mr. Francis made but very short replies, either taking what he said as words of course, or because the disorder of his own mind would not permit him to prolong the conversation.

It is likely Mr. Trueworth was not much troubled at the hasty leave this young gentleman took ; for though he always had a very sincere regard for him, yet the point, on which he now had come, was tender, and could not be touched upon without giving him some pain ; — he had no time however to make many reflections on the conversation had passed between them. — A letter was brought him by a porter, who waiting for an answer, he immediately opened it, and found the contents as follow :

F 2 To

232493

To CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq.

‘ Sir,

‘ Extraordinary merits seldom fail of having as extraordinary effects; — you have made a conquest of a heart, without knowing it, which not the utmost endeavours of any other could ever subdue. — I am commissioned to acquaint you, that a lady of some consideration in the world, and a large fortune in her own hands, thinks you alone deserve to be the master, both of that and of herself; but as she is apprehensive of your being already engaged, begs you will be so generous as to confess the truth, that if so, she may put a timely stop to the progress of her growing passion; — if not, you will, doubtless, hear more from her by the hand of,

‘ SIR,

‘ Your unknown servant.

‘ P.S. Please to send this back, with your answer wrote on the other side of the paper, which you may put up under a cover sealed up, but without any direction. — Sincerity and secrecy are earnestly requested.’

Mr

Mr. Trueworth could not avoid looking on this adventure as a very odd one; yet whether the proposal was real or feigned, the matter was wholly indifferent to him, and he hesitated not a moment what part he should take in it; but fate down immediately, and wrote, as desired, the following answer:

To the UNKNOWN.

Sir, or madam,

THOUGH I knew the honour with which you flatter me is more the effect of fortune than desert, it would certainly make me vain and happy, were I not denied the power of accepting it. — The heart required of me by the lady is already disposed of, — irrecoverably disposed of, and I can only repay her goodness by sincerely wishing a return of her's, and with it all those felicities she would so lavishly bestow on,

Her most obliged,

And most humble servant,

C. TRUEWORTH.

• P.S. The lady may depend, that my
‘ secrecy shall be equal to the sincerity
‘ I have shewn in this.’

He had no sooner dispatched the messenger who brought this, than a second came and presented him with another, and had orders also to wait for an answer; — he presently knew it came from miss Flora, and expected the contents to be such as he found them on perusing:

To CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

‘ *Most cruel and ungenerous Man!*

‘ LOTH I am to give you epithets like these, — my heart shudders, and my trembling hand is scarce able to guide my pen, in those reproaches, which my reason tells me you deserve: — how unkind, — how stabbing to the soul was your behaviour at our last meeting! — yet even then you promised me to write, — I depended on that promise, and hope had not quite forsook me; — every knocking at the door, I expected was a messenger from you: — in vain I expected, — in vain I looked, — in vain I listened for the welcome mandate, and every disappointment threw me into fresh agonies,

‘ — I

' — I have sent twice to the coffee-house,
' — been there once in person, but could
' hear nothing of you : — O ! what secret
' recess now hides you from me ! — What
' can have caused so terrible a reverse in
' my so lately happy fate ? — I fear to
' guess ; for madness is in the thought !
' — O ! do not drive me to extremes ! —
' Many women, with not half my love,
' or my despair, have run headlong into
' actions, which, in my cooler moments,
' I dread to think on. — Be assured, I
' cannot, — will not live without you !
' Torture me not any longer with sus-
' pense ! — Pronounce my doom at once !
' — But let it be from your own mouth
' that I receive it, that you, at least, may
' be witness of the death you inflict, and
' be compelled to pity, if you cannot
' love,

‘ The most unfortunate,

‘ And most faithful of her sex,

‘ F. MELLASIN.

‘ P.S. I have charged the man, who
‘ brings you this, to find you where-
‘ ever you are, and not to leave you
‘ without an answer.

Mr. Trueworth was in the utmost perplexity of mind, on reading this distract^d epistle. — Of all the hours of his past life he could not recollect any one, which gave him so much cause of repentance, as that wherein he had commenced an amour with a woman of so violent a temper; — he had never loved her, and all the liking he ever had of her being now utterly erased by a more laudable impression, the guilty pleasures he had enjoyed with her were now irksome to his remembrance, and the more she endeavoured to revive the tender folly in him, the more she grew distasteful to him.

It so little becomes a woman, whose characteristic should be modesty, to use any endeavours to enforce desire, that those who do it are sure to convert love into indifference, and indifference into loathing and contempt: — even she, who, with the greatest seeming delicacy, labours to rekindle a flame once extinguished, will find the truth of what Morat says in the play:

“ To love once pass'd we cannot back-
“ ward move;
“ Call yesterday again, and we may
“ love.”

Mr.

Mr. Trueworth, however, had so much pity for that unfortunate creature, that he would have given, perhaps, good part of his estate, that she no longer loved him; but how to turn the tide of so extravagant a passion, he could not yet resolve, and it being near the time, in which he knew they would expect him at sir Bazil's, where he now dined every day, and the messenger who brought the letter also growing impatient to be dispatched, he wrote in haste these few lines:

To miss FLORA MELLASIN.

• *Madam,*

BUSINESS of the greatest consequence now calls upon me, and I have no time to write as I would do, but depend upon it, that I will send to you to-morrow morning, and either appoint a meeting, or let you know my real sentiments in a letter, — 'till when, beg you will make yourself more easy, you desire to oblige him, who is,
With the most unfeigned good wishes,

• *MADAM,*

• Your most humble,

• And most obedient servant,

C. TRUEWORTH:

F 5

• P.S.

S.P.S. I shall take it as a favour, I make no doubt, that you will henceforward forbear to make any enquiry concerning me at the coffee-house, or elsewhere.

Having given this to miss Eldra's porter, he hasted away to sir Bazil's, there to compose his mind, after the embarrassments it had sustained that morning.

C H A P. IX.

Contains very little to the purpose.

MR. Francis Thoughtless had no sooner left the lodgings of mr. Trueworth, than he went directly to those of his sister Betsy, where, in the humour he then was, the reader will easily suppose, he could not be very good company: — after telling her he had seen mr. Trueworth, and had some conversation with him on her account, — ‘ I am now convinced,’ said he, ‘ of what before I doubted not, that by your own ill management, and want of a just sense of what is for your interest and happiness, you have lost an opportunity of establishing both, which can

Miss Betsy Thoughtless. 107

can never be retrieved; — nor is this all, — your manner of behaviour not only ruins yourself, but involves all belonging to you in endless quarrels and perplexities.

These were reproaches which miss Betsy had too much spirit to have borne from any one but a brother, and even to him, she was far from yielding that she had in any measure deserved them; — ‘I defy Trueworth himself,’ cried she, with all the resentment of a disappointed lover in her heart, to accuse me of one action, that the strictest virtue could condemn.

‘Ah, sister,’ replied he, ‘do not let your vanity deceive you on this score: — I see very plainly, that mr. Trueworth regards you with too much indifference to retain resentment for any treatment you have given him; — that he once loved you I am well assured; that he no longer does so, is owing to yourself: — but I shall mention him no more, — the passion he had for you is extinguished, I believe, beyond all possibility of reviving; nor would I wish you to attempt it: — I would only have you remember what mr. Goodman uttered concerning you with almost his dying

‘ dying breath ; for my own part, I have
‘ not been a witness of your conduct,
‘ since the unhappy brûlée I fell into on
‘ your account at Oxford, which I then
‘ hoped would be a sufficient warning for
‘ your future conduct.’

If miss Betty had been less innocent, it is probable she would have replied in a more satisfactory manner to her brother's reproaches ; but the real disdain she always had for whatever had the least tendency to dishonour, made her zealous in defending herself only in things, of which she was not accused, and too silent in regard of those, in which she was judged blame-worthy.

‘ What avails your being virtuous ?’ said mr. Francis : — ‘ I hope, — and I believe you are so ; — but your reputation is of more consequence to your family : — the loss of the one might be concealed, but a blemish on the other brings certain infamy and disgrace on yourself, and all belonging to you.’

On this, she assumed the courage to tell him, his way of reasoning was neither just nor delicate. — ‘ Would you,’ said she, ‘ be guilty of a base action, rather than have it suspected that you were so ?’

‘ So?’ — ‘ No,’ answered he; ‘ but virtue is a different thing in our sex, to what it is in yours; — the forfeiture of what is called virtue in a woman is more a folly than a baseness; but the virtue of a man is his courage, his constancy, his prob~~it~~, which if he loses, he becomes contemptible to himself, as well as to the world.’

‘ And certainly,’ rejoined miss Betsy, with some warmth, ‘ the loss of innocence must render a woman contemptible to herself, though she should happen to hide her transgression from the world.’ — ‘ That may be,’ said mr. Francis; ‘ but then her kindred suffer not through her fault: — the remorse, and the vexation for what she has done, is all her own. — Indeed, sister,’ continued he, ‘ a woman brings less dishonour upon a family, by twenty private sins, than by one public indiscretion.’

‘ Well,’ answered she, ‘ I hope I shall always take care to avoid both the one and the other, for my own sake. — As to indulging myself with the innocent pleasures of the town, I have the example of some ladies of the first quality, and best reputation, to justify me in it.’

Mr.

110 *The HISTORY of*

Mr. Thoughtless was about to make some reply, which, perhaps, would have been pretty keen, but was prevented by the coming in of her maid, who delivering a letter to her, and saying, ‘From sir Frederick [redacted] sir, madam,’ she hastily broke it open, and having read it, bid the maid let sir Frederick’s servant know she would be at home.

‘There, brother,’ said she, giving him the letter, ‘read that, and be convinced I have not lost every good offer in losing mr. Trueworth.’ — ‘I wish you had not,’ answered he sullenly. — He took the paper, however, and read the contents of it, which were these:

To the divine arbitres of my fate, the omnipotently lovely miss BETSY
THOUGHTLESS.

O Goddes! more cruel than the avenging Nemisis, what have I done; that like Ixion I must still be tortured on the wheel of everlasting hopes and fears? — I hoped yesterday to have approached the shrine of your resplendent charms, but you had quitted the sacred dome which you inhabit, and vouchsafed to bless some happier man — sion

Miss Betsy THOUGHTLESS. 111

lion with your presence; — perhaps a
rival: — Oh, forbid it heaven! — for-
bid it all ye stars, that under the Supreme
rule all beneath the moon! — the
thought is terrible, and shocks the in-
most cavities of my adoring jealous soul;
— I kneel while I am writing, and im-
plore you to grant me permission to sip
a cup of nectar and ambrosia at your
tea-table this afternoon; — and if you
can, without injustice to superior merit,
debar all other intruders thence, that I
may have liberty to pour forth my eja-
culations at your feet. — I am,

With the most ardent devotion, to
the Brightest resplendency of beauty,

Your most adoring,

And everlasting slave,

F. FINEER;

As little as Mr. Francis at this time
was disposed to mirth, he could not, in
spite of his ill humour, refrain laughing,
on reading some expressions in this hereti-
cally learned epistle: — “I need not ask,”
throwing the letter contemptu-
ously on the table, “who, or what this
adorer of yours is? — it is easy to
see

‘ see he is either mad or a fool, or thinks
‘ to make you so.’

‘ I have as bad an opinion of his in-
‘ tellects as you have,’ replied she ; ‘ but I
‘ assure you he is a baronet, and the pre-
‘ sumptive ~~he~~ of a much greater title,
‘ and has an estate large enough to keep
‘ me a coach and twelve, if the custom
‘ of the country permitted.’

Mr. Francis paused for a few moments, and after looking over the letter again, —
‘ I wish,’ said he, ‘ instead of a fool of
‘ fashion, he is not a knave in the disguise
‘ of a coxcomb ; — his stupidity seems
‘ to me to be too egregious to be natu-
‘ ral, — all his expressions have more the
‘ appearance of a studied affectation, than
‘ of a real folly ; — take care sister, I have
‘ heard there are many impostors in this
‘ town, who are continually on the watch
‘ for young ladies, who have lost their
‘ parents, and live in the unguarded man-
‘ ner you do.’

Miss Betsy seemed to treat her brother’s
suspicions on this head with a good deal
of contempt : — she told him, that the
person, at whose house she became ac-
quainted with sir Frederick, knew all
circumstances perfectly well, — that

had a prodigious estate, — was of a very ancient and honourable family, and conversed with several people of the first quality in England ; — ‘ However,’ added she, ‘ you may call here this afternoon, and see him yourself if you please ; for, according to my judgment, he has not wit enough to be an impudent.’

Mr. Francis replied, that he would be glad to see so extraordinary a person, if he were not obliged to go upon some business, relating to the commission he was soliciting, which he feared would detain him beyond the hour ; — but wish your leave,’ said he, ‘ I will take this letter with me, and hear what my brother thinks of it.’

To this miss Betsy readily agreed, and went away in somewhat of a better humour than he had entered, or that he had put her into by the severe reprimands he given her.

She had a very tender regard for her thers, but did not think it their pro-
te to prescribe rules for her behaviour ;
she looked upon herself as a better
in what manner it would become
it, than they could possibly be,
she lived more years in London
than

that either of them had done months, and if she was willing to be advised, would not submit to be directed by them.

Thus did her pride a while support her spirits, but when she reflected on the affair of Mr. ~~Black~~worth, and the reasons she had given him for speaking and thinking of her in that cool and indifferent manner, she found he now did, she began to be somewhat less tenacious, and acknowledged within herself, that her brother Frank, exclusive of his friendship for that gentleman, had sufficient cause to blame her conduct in that point, and the heat of passion, which had been raised by some expressions he had uttered being over, she ceased to take unkindly what she was now sensible had only been occasioned by his zeal for her welfare.

She now saw in their true light all the mistakes she had been guilty of, — all her dangers, — all her escapes, — and blushed to remember, how she had been plunged into the one, merely by her own inadvertency, and been blessed with the other, only by the interposition of some accident, altogether unforeseen, and even un hoped for, by her.

She had also a more just and lively idea of the merits of Mr. Truworth, than ever she had been capable of entertaining, while he professed himself her lover: — the amiableness of his person, — his fine understanding, — his generosity, — his bravery, — his wit, — and the delicacy and elegance of his conversation, seemed to her impossible to be equal'd; — she considered too, that his estate was much beyond what her fortune could expect, and that even his family was superior to her's, and could not help being very sensibly affected, that she had so rashly thrown away her pretensions to the heart of so valuable a man.

'Tis true,' said she, 'that if I had an inclination to marry, I have other offers: — Mr. Munden, by his way of living, must have a good estate, perhaps not inferior to that of Mr. Truworth: — the man has good sense, and wants neither personal nor acquired endowments, and I have tried both his love and constancy; — besides, he lives always in town, has a taste for the pleasures of it, — a woman could not be very unhappy in being his wife. — Then there is Sir Frederick Fineer; — he is a fool indeed, — but he is a man

of

• of quality, and I know several ladies
• who are the envy of their own sex, a
• the toast of the other, and yet ha
• fools for their husbands.'

In this manner did she continue reasf
ing within her self, till her head began
ake, and she was luckily relieved from
by the last mentioned subject of her n
ditations.

He approached her with his accustomed formalities, first saluting the hem of her garment, then her hand, and lastly her lips, which she receiving with an air more than ordinarily serious, and making very short replies to the speeches he had prepared to entertain her with : — ‘ What invidious cloud, ’ said he, ‘ obscures the lightning of your eye, and hides half the divinity from my wish’d sight ! ’ — ‘ People cannot be always in the same humour, sir Frederic,’ answered she. — ‘ Your’s should be ways gay,’ rejoined he, ‘ if once were mine ; — you should do nothing but love and laugh, and dress, eat, and drink, and be adored : speak then, my angel,’ continued he, ‘ when shall be the happy day ? — Shall it be to-morrow ? ’

Here it was not in her power to retain any part of her former gravity : — ‘ Bless me,’ cried she, ‘ to-morrow ! — What, marry to-morrow ? — sure, sir Frederick, you cannot think of such a thing ? — Why, I have not so much as dreamt of it.’ — ‘ No matter,’ answered he, ‘ you will have golden dreams enough in my embraces, — defer then the mutual bliss no longer, — let it be to-morrow.’ — ‘ You are certainly mad, sir Frederick,’ said she ; ‘ but if I were enough so too, as really to consent to such a hasty nuptial, — where pray are the preparations for it ?’

‘ Oh, madam, as to that,’ resumed he, ‘ people of quality always marry in a deshabille ; — a new coach, — chariot, — servants, — liveries, and rich cloaths for ourselves, may all be got ready before we make our public appearance at court, or at church.’ — ‘ But there are other things to be considered,’ said miss Betsy, laughing outright. — ‘ None of any importance,’ replied he : — ‘ I will jointure you in my whole estate, — the writings shall be drawn to-night, and presented to you with the wedding-ring.’

“ This

‘ This would be wonderful dispatch indeed,’ said she; ‘ but, sir, I have two brothers whom I must first consult on the affair.’ — Sir Frederick seemed extremely struck at these words; but recovering himself as soon as he was able, ‘ I thought, madam,’ cried he, ‘ you were entirely at your own disposal.’ — ‘ I am so, sir,’ answered she; ‘ but I love my brothers, and will do nothing without their approbation.’ — ‘ Ah, cruel fair,’ cried he, ‘ little do you know the delicacy of my passion, — I must owe you wholly to yourself; — your brothers, no doubt, would favour my desires, but ’tis your own free-will alone can make me blessed. — Tell me not then of brothers,’ continued he, ‘ but generously say you will be mine.’

Miss Betsy was about to make some reply, when word was brought that a servant of the elder Mr. Thoughtless desired to speak with her, on which she arose hastily, and went to the top of the stair-case to hear what message he had to deliver to her, and was pleasingly surprised when he told her, that his master desired the favour of her company to supper immediately at his house. — As she never had an invitation there before, she was at a loss

to guess what could have caused so sudden an alteration ; — she asked the fellow what company was there : — he told her, only mr. Francis, and another gentleman whose name he knew not, but believed they wanted her on some affairs concerning the late mr. Goodman, because as he was waiting, he heard them often mention that gentleman and lady Mellafin.

Though she could not conceive on what purpose she was to be consulted on any thing relating to mr. Goodman, yet she was extremely glad, that any occasion had happened to induce her brother to send for her to his house, and ordered the man to acquaint his master, that she would not fail to wait upon him, with as much expedition as a chair could bring her.

On her return to sir Frederick, she told him, she had received a summons from her elder brother, which she was under an indispensable necessity of complying with, so desired he would defer, 'till another opportunity, any farther discourse on the subject they had been talking of. — Having said this, she called hastily for her fan and gloves, and at the same time gave orders for a chair. — Sir Frederick seemed very much confounded, finding that any attempt to detain her

her would be impracticable, took his leave, saying, ‘ You are going to your brother’s, madam:’ To which she answering, she was so. ‘ I beg then, madam,’ rejoined he, ‘ that you will not mention any thing concerning me, or the passion I have for you, till I have the honour of seeing you again. — Be assured,’ continued he, ‘ I have mighty reasons for this request, and such, as I flatter myself you will allow to be just.’ — He said no more, but perceiving she was ready, led her down stairs, and having put her into a chair, went into that which waited for himself, little satisfied with the success of this visit.

Though the motives on which miss Betsy’s company was desired in so much hurry, by a brother, who had never before once invited her, may seem strange, yet as that incident was but the consequence of other matters, which yet remain untold, regularity requires they should first be discussed.

C H A P. X.

Contains an account of some transactions, which, though they may not be very pleasing in the repetition, nor are of any great consequence to miss Betsy, would render this history extremely deficient, if omitted.

AS lady Mellasin has made so considerable a figure in the former parts of this history, the reader may perhaps now begin to think she has been too long neglected, it is therefore proper to proceed directly to some account, how that guilty and unfortunate woman behaved, after being driven in the manner already related from the house of her much-injured husband. — Mr. Goodman was advised by his lawyer to be extremely private in the prosecution he was going to commence against her, and by no means to let her know the secret of her criminal conversation with Marplus had been discovered in: — this seemed a caution necessary observed, in order to prevent her taking any measures, either to intercept the evidence of the witnesses, or I. G. prevail

prevail upon them to abscond, when the proof of what they had sworn against her should be expected : — the whole detection of her guilt was designed to come at once upon her like a thunderclap, and thereby all the little efforts of artifice and chicanry, to which she, doubtless, would otherwise have had recourse, be rendered of no use, nor give the least impediment to justice.

Accordingly, this zealous assertor of his client's cause went to visit her, as of his own good will ; — flattered her with the hope, that her husband would soon be prevailed upon to take her home again, and lent her several small sums of money to supply her necessities, saying, at the same time, that when matters were made up between them, and all was over, he very well knew mr. Goodman would return it to him with thanks.

This stratagem had the effect it was intended for ; — it not only kept her from attempting any thing of the nature above-mentioned, but also from running mr. Goodman into debt, which certainly she might have done, on some pretence or other, in spite of all the care and means that could have been taken to destroy her credit.

It must be acknowledged, indeed, that acting in this manner was a prodigious piece of dissimulation ; but, at the same time, it must be acknowledged also, that it was abundantly justified by the cause, and practised for the most laudable end, to serve an honest, worthy gentleman, his friend and client, against a woman, who had wronged him in the tenderest point, and who was capable of making use of the vilest methods to elude the punishment her crimes deserved ; and as a great author tells us,

‘ It is a kind of stupid honesty,
‘ Among known knaves, to play upon
‘ the square.’

Lady Mellasin, however, was lulled into so perfect a security by her dependence on the good-nature of her husband, and the tender affection he had always shewn to her, as well as by the high character she had always heard of the lawyer’s veracity, that she was more easy than could have been expected, in a woman of her situation, even though it had been as she was made to believe.

She received, and returned, with her politeness and gaiety, the visits that

were made her by all those who thought proper to continue an acquaintance with her ; — she pretended that it was only a little family contest, that had separated her from mr. Goodman for a short time ; and always mentioned him with so much kindness and respect, as made every one believe, there was nothing between them, but what would be easily made up.

This was indeed the most prudent method she could take, not only to preserve her own reputation to the world, but also to give mr. Goodman a high idea of her conduct, if what she said should happen to be repeated to him,

She was every day in expectation, that through her own good management, and the intercession of the lawyer, whom she now took to be her staunch friend, all would be over, and she should be recalled home, when a citation to appear before the doctors of the civil law was delivered to her, by an officer belonging to that court.

It is more easy to conceive than describe her distraction, at so unlooked-for a turn ; — she now found, that her intrigue with Marplus was discovered, and that all she had to dread, was like to

upon her by that event ; — her perplexity was also greatly increased, by her not being able to find out by whom, or by what means she had been betrayed ; — she sent immediately in search of Marplus, whom, since his arresting mr. Goodman, she had never once seen, nor heard any thing of ; but all the information she could get of him, was, that he had been thrown in prison by mr. Goodman, and after confinement of a few days, had been released, and was gone nobody knew where, but as it was supposed out of England ; — that his wife had likewise removed from her lodgings, but whether with an intention to follow him, or not, no certain intelligence could be given.

As this unhappy woman, therefore, neither knew on what foundation the accusation against her was built, nor what evidences could be produced to prove it, she might very well be bewildered in her thoughts, and not know what course to take ; yet amidst all these matters of astonishment, — oppressed with grief, and struck with horror at the near prospect of approaching infamy, she had courage, and ~~to~~ ~~for~~ ~~in~~ ~~on~~ ~~at~~ ~~with~~ ~~about~~ ~~near~~ ~~approaching~~ ~~infamy~~ ~~she~~ ~~had~~ ~~courage~~ ~~and~~ ~~boldness~~ ~~enough~~ ~~of~~ ~~mind~~, to enable her to do every thing that was necessary for defence in so bad a cause.

Mr. Goodman's indisposition putting a stop to the process, she had time to consult with those whom she found most qualified for the purpose; — her chief agent was a pettyfogger, or understrapper in the law, one who knew all those quirks and evasions, which are called the knavish part of it, and as the extreme indigence of his circumstances made him ready to undertake any thing, though never so desperate, provided it afforded a prospect of advantage, so he had impudence and cunning enough to go through with it, even to the hazard of his ears.

This man kept up her spirits, by assuring her, he would find ways and means so to puzzle the cause, that nothing should be clearly proved against her; but there was no opportunity for him to exercise his abilities this way, for mr. Goodman's death soon after furnished him with another. — Lady Mellasin was no sooner informed, by spies she kept continually about mr. Goodman's house, that his life was despaired of, than they set about making his will; — the first article of which, after the prelude usual in such writings, was this:

IMPRIMIS,

' IMPRIMIS, I give and bequeath to
my dear and well-beloved wife Mar-
garet, lady Mellasin Goodman, the full
sum of thirty thousand pounds of law-
ful money of Great-Britain, over and
above what otherwise she might lay
claim to as my widow, in consideration
of the great wrong I have done her,
through the insinuations of malicious
and evil-minded persons, which I now
heartily repent me of, and hope, that
God and she will forgive me for it.'

Then followed some other legacies to
several of his kindred, and those of his
friends, whom he had been known to
be the most intimate with ; but
the sums to each were very trifling, and
the amount in the whole to above
or eight hundred pounds. — As
one, who had the least acquaintance
with Mr. Goodman, was very well con-
vinced, that he had always intended his
nephew for his heir, the pretended will
went on in this manner :

' Item, I give and bequeath to my
nephew, Edward Goodman, the
sum of Nathaniel Goodman, and of Ca-
rine his wife, late of Bengal, in the
Indies, the whole residue of my
G 4 effects,

effects, whatsoever and wheresoever they shall be found at my demise ; — provided, that he, the said Edward Goodman, shall take to be his lawful wife, Flora Mellasin, only daughter, and remaining issue of sir Timon Mellasin, bart. and of the above-mentioned Margaret his wife ; but in case that either party shall refuse to enter into such marriage, then, that he, the said Edward Goodman, shall be obliged to pay to the said Flora Mellasin, the full sum of five thousand pounds of lawful money of Great-Britain, in consideration of the misfortunes she has suffered, by the injury I have done her mother.'

This impudent piece of forgery was signed Samuel Goodman, — in a character so like that gentleman's, that when compared with other papers of his own hand-writing, the difference could not be distinguished by those who was best acquainted with it : — two persons also of the lawyer's procuring, set their names as witnesses.

Notwithstanding the flagrancy of this attempt, lady Mellasin flattered herself with the hopes of its success, and on mr. Goodman's death threw in a caveat against the real will, and set up this pretended one.

On

On the other hand, though one would imagine there needed but little skill for the detection of so gross an imposition, yet mr. Goodman's lawyer thought proper to get all the helps he could to corroborate the truth.—The piece of forgery was dated about ten days before mr. Goodman died; — he knew, that the elder mr. Thoughtless came every day to visit him, during the whole time of his sickness, and that miss Betsy, at the time this will was supposed to be made, actually lived in the house, and that neither of these two could be totally ignorant of such a transaction, in case any such had been.

It was therefore on the lawyer's request, that miss Betsy was sent for to her brother's house; — she answered with a great deal of readiness, to all the questions he put to her, according to the best of her knowledge, particularly, as to that concerning the making the will, she said, that she had never heard the least mention of any lawyer but himself coming to mr. Goodman's, during the whole time of his sickness, and that she verily believed, no will, but that drawn up by him, and which all the family knew of, could possibly be made by mr. Goodman's

orders, or in his house; and as to the article in the pretended will, relating to miss Flora, nothing could be a more palpable forgery, because mr. Goodman had offered five hundred pounds with her in marriage to a linnen-draper, not above six weeks before his parting with lady Mellafin, ‘ which,’ added she, ‘ is a very plain proof, that he never intended her for his nephew.’

All the time miss Betsy stayed, the whole discourse was on this affair, and she had no opportunity, as the lawyer was present, to acquaint her brothers with any thing concerning sir Frederick Fineer, as otherwise it was her full intention to have done, after the surprising injunction he had laid upon her of secrefy, in regard of his passion, and every thing relating to him.



CHAR

C H A P. XI.

Is very well deserving the attention of all those who are about to marry.

WHILE miss Flora was buoyed up with the expectation, that her mother would soon be reconciled to mr. Goodman, she abated not of her former gaiety, and thought of nothing but indulging her amorous inclinations with the man she liked ; but when once those expectations ceased, her spirits began to fail : — she now found it necessary for her interest, as well as pleasure, to preserve, if possible, the affection of her lover ; — she knew not what dreadful consequences the prosecution, mr. Goodman was about to exhibit against her mother, might be attended with, and trembled to think, she must share with her the double load of infamy and penury, and rightly judged, that a man of mr. Truworth's fortune, honour, and good-nature, would not suffer a woman, with whom he continued a tender communication, to be oppressed with any ills his purse could relieve her from : — the apprehensions, therefore, that she might one day be reduced to stand in

need of his support, assisted the real passion she had for him, and made her feel, on the first appearance of his growing coldness towards her, all those horrors, those distractions, which her letters to him had so livelyly represented.

On his ceasing to make any fixed appointment with her, and from seeing her every day, to seeing her but once in three or four days, gave her, with reason, the most terrible alarms; — but when, after an absence of near a week, she had followed him to the coffee-house, the cool and indifferent reception she there met with, gave her, indeed, a mortal stab to all her hopes, and she no longer hesitated to pronounce her own doom, and cry out, she was undone.

The excuse he made of business was too weak, — too trite, — too common place to gain any credit with her, or alleviate her sorrows; — she knew the world too well to imagine a young gay gentleman, like him, would forego whatever he thought a pleasure, for any business he could possibly have; — she doubted not but there was a woman in the cafe, and the thoughts that, while she was in vain expecting him, he was soliciting those favours from a rival, she had so lavishly bestowed, languish-

languished to repeat, fired her jealous brain, even to a degree of frenzy.

Awhile she raved with all the wild despair of ill requited burning love, but other emotions soon rose in her distracted bosom not to controul, but add fresh fewel to the flame already kindled there : — ‘ My circumstances ! ’ cried she ; — ‘ my wretched circumstances ! — What will become of me ? — involved in my mother’s shame, he will, perhaps, make that a pretence for abandoning me to those misfortunes, I thought I might have depended on him to relieve :

However, as the little billet, in answer to her last letter to him, contained a promise, that he would write to her the next day, she endeavoured, as much as she was able, to compose herself till that time, though she was far from hoping the explanation she expected to receive in it, could afford any consolation to her tormented mind.

Mr. Trueworth also, in the mean time, is not without his own anxieties : — a man of honour frequently finds more difficulty in getting rid of a woman he is fond of, and loves him, than obtaining a woman he loves, and is in pursuit of ;

of ; but this gentleman had a more than ordinary perplexity to struggle through : — few women would go the lengths miss Flora had done for the accomplishment of her desires, and he easily saw, by the whole tenor of her behaviour, she would go as great, and even more to continue the enjoyment of them.

Glad would he have been to have brought her by degrees to an indifference for him, — to have prevailed on her to submit her passion to the government of her reason, and to be convinced, that an amour, such as their's had been, ought to be looked upon only as a transient pleasure ; — to be continued while mutual inclination and convenience permitted, and when broke off remembered but as a dream.

But this he found was not to be done with a woman of miss Flora's temper ; — he therefore thought it best not to keep her any longer in suspense, but let her know at once the revolution in her fate, as to that point, which regarded him, and the true motive that had occasioned it, which he accordingly did in these terms :

To miss FLORA MELLASIN.

‘ MADAM,

‘ IT is with very great difficulty I employ my pen to tell you, it is wholly inconvenient for us ever to meet again, in the manner we have lately done; but I flatter myself you have too much good sense, and too much honour, not to forgive what all laws, both human and divine, oblige me to. — I am entering into a state, which utterly forbids the continuance of those gallantries, which before pleaded their own excuse; — in fine, I am going to be married, and it would be the highest injustice in me to expect that fidelity, which alone can make me happy in a wife, if my own conduct did not set her an example.

‘ Though I must cease to languish for a repetition of those favours you have blessed me with, yet be assured I shall always remember them with gratitude, and the best good wishes for the prosperity of the fair bestower.’

‘ I send you back all the testimonies I have received of your tenderness, that are in my power to return: — It belongs to yourself to make use of your utmost

utmost endeavours for the recovery of
the heart, which dictated them. — This
I earnestly entreat of you, and in the
hope that you will soon accomplish a
work so absolutely necessary for your
peace and reputation, I remain,

As far as honour will permit,

MADAM,

Your most obliged,

And most humble servant,

C. TRUEWORTH.

Mr. Trueworth flattered himself, that so plain a declaration of his sentiments, and intentions, would put a total end to all future correspondence between them, and having looked it over, after he had finished and found it such as he thought proper for the purpose, put it under a cover, with all the letters he had received from miss Flora, not excepting the first invitation she had made him, under the title of the Incognita, and sent away the packet by a porter; for he had never entrusted his servants with the conveyance of any epistle from him to that lady.

Mrs.

Miss Flora, from the moment her eyes were open in the morning, if it can be supposed she had any sleep that night, had been watching with the most racking impatience for the arrival of Mr. True-worth's messenger; — she wished, but dreaded more the eclaircissement, which she expected would be contained in the mandate he had promised to send, yet was distracted for the certainty, how cruel soever it might prove.

At length it came, and with it a confirmation of even worse than the most terrible of her apprehensions had suggested: — the sight of her own letters on her opening it, almost threw her into a swoon; but when her streaming eyes had greedily devoured the contents of the billet that accompanied them, excess of desperation struck her for some moments stupid, and rendered her mind inactive as her frame.

But when awakened from this lethargy of silent grief, she felt all the horrors of a fate she had so much dreaded: — frustrated at once in every hope, that love or interest had presented to her, words cannot paint the wildness of her fancy; — she tore her hair and garments, and scarce spared

spared that face, she had taken so much pains to ornament, for wanting charms to secure the conquest it had gained.

But with the more violence those tourbillions of the mind rage for a while, the sooner they subside, and all is hush'd again; — as I remember to have somewhere read,

- After a tempest, when the winds are
‘ laid,
- The calm sea wonders at the wreck
‘ it made.’

So this unhappy and abandoned creature, too much deserving of the fate she met with, having exhausted her whole stock of tears, and wasted all the breath that life could spare, in fruitless exclamations, the passions which had raised these commotions in her soul, became more weak, and the beguiler Hope once more returned, to lull her wearied spirits into a short-lived ease.

She now saw the folly of venting her rage upon herself; — that to give way to grief and despair would avail her nothing, but only serve to render her more miserable; — that instead of sitting tamely down, and meanly lamenting her misfor-

tune in the loss of a lover, on whom she had built so much, she ought rather to exert all the courage, resolution, and artifice she was mistress of, in contriving some way of preventing it, if possible.

' He is not yet married,' said she ; —
' the irrevocable words not yet are past : —
— I have already broke off his court-
ship to one woman, — why may I not
be as successful in doing so with ano-
ther ? — He cannot love the present em-
grosser of his heart more than he did
miss Betsy Thoughtless ; — 'tis worth,
at least, the pains of an attempt.'

The first step she had to take, towards the execution of her design, was to find out the name, condition, and dwelling, of her happy rival, and this she thought there would be no great difficulty in doing, as she doubted not but mr. True-worth visited her every day, and it would be easy for her to employ a person to watch where he went, and afterwards to make the proper enquiries.

But, in the mean time, it required the consideration how to behave to that gentleman, so as to preserve in him some of esteem for her, without which she judged it would be impossible for her

her ever to recover his love, in case she should be so fortunate as to separate him from the present object of his flame.

She knew very well, that all testimonies of despair, in a woman no longer loved, only create uneasiness in the man who occasioned it, and but serve to make him more heartily wish to get rid of her ; she therefore found it best, as it certainly was, to pretend to fall in with Mr. Trueworth's way of thinking, — seem to be convinced by his reasons, and ready to submit to whatever suited with his interest or convenience : — it was some time before she could bring herself into a fit temper for this act of dissimulation, but she at last arrived at it, and gave a proof how great a proficient she was in it, by the following lines :

To CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

‘ Dear Sir,

‘ I AM apt to believe you as little expected as desired an answer to the eclaircissement of yesterday, nor would I have given you the trouble of this, but to assure you, it shall be the last of any kind you ever shall receive from me. — Yes, — I have now done with reproaches, and complaints, — I have nothing

nothing to alledge against you, — nothing to accuse you of : — could the fond folly of my tender passion have given me leisure for a moment's reflection, I had foreseen, that the misfortune, which is now falling upon me, was inevitable. — I am now convinced, that I ought not to have hoped, that the unbounded happiness I so lately enjoyed, could be of any long duration ; — that a man of your fortune and figure in the world, must one day marry ; — names and families must be supported, and your's is too considerable for you to suffer it to be extinct : — I must not, — I will not, therefore, repine at a thing, which, in my cooler moments, I cannot but look upon as essential to your honour and convenience. — Had you quitted me on any other score, I cannot answer but I might have been hurried into extravagancies displeasing to you, and unbecoming of myself : — but here I must resign, and am determined to do so, with the same patience, in shew at least, as if I had never loved. — I will not tell you the agonies I have sustained in the cruel fight, between my reason and my affection, in making this resolution : — sufficient for you to know, that the latter has the victory. — More might

too

‘ too much effect your generous nature ;
 ‘ besides, when woes are remediless, they
 ‘ are best borne in silence.

‘ Farewell ! — Oh, farewell for ever !
 ‘ — may you find every thing in the
 ‘ happy she you make your choice of, to
 ‘ give you lasting bliss ; and, to com-
 ‘ pleat all, may she love you with the
 ‘ same ardency, tenderness, and disinte-
 ‘ restedness, as her, who must now only
 ‘ subscribe herself,

‘ At an eternal distance !

‘ Dear, dear SIR,

‘ Your most faithful friend,

‘ And humble servant,

‘ F. MELLASIN.’

This letter, which, it must be confessed, was wrote artfully enough, had all the effect it was intended for, on the mind of Mr. Trueworth ; — it not only afforded him an infinity of contentment, as he hoped she would soon be enabled to banish all those disturbed emotions, which naturally attend the breaking off an acquaintance, such as their's had been, but it also established in him, a very high idea

idea of her good understanding, — disinterested affection, — honour, and sincerity; but how long he continued in this favourable opinion, as to the three last mentioned qualifications, will hereafter be shewn.

In the mean time, something happened, which, as he was a man just, even to the extremest nicety, gave him, according to his way of thinking, a great deal of reason to reproach himself.

CHAP. XII.

Miss Betsy's innocence, as to the Denham affair, fully cleared up to mr. Trueworth, by a very extraordinary accident.

MR. Trueworth had made so great a progress in his courtship, that the sincerity of miss Harriot got the better of her bashfulness, even so far as to confess to him, it was with pleasure she yielded to the persuasions of her friends, in favour of his love, and that he had infinitely the preference of all mankind in her esteem; in fine, her behaviour was such, as left nothing

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nothing wanting but the ceremony to assure him of his happiness.

Sir Bazil also having concluded every thing with the father of his mistress, brought that young lady acquainted with his sisters, who, highly approving their brother's choice, soon treated her, and were treated by her, with the same affection and familiarity as if already united.

There were few hours, excepting those allotted by nature and custom for repose, which this aimable company did not pass together; the old gentleman, who was extremely good humoured, when nothing relating to the parting with his money came on the carpet, would frequently make one among them, and being one day more than ordinarily cheerful, told Mr. Trueworth, that as he found the two weddings were to be solemnized in one day, and he should give his daughter's hand to Sir Bazil, desired he might also have the honour of bestowing Miss Harriot's upon him; — to which Mr. Trueworth replied, that he should joyfully receive her from any hands, but more particularly from his; — and that he took the offer he made him as a very great favour: — on this, the other grew very

very gay, and said abundance of merry things, to the no small expence of blushes, both in his daughter and miss Harriot.

It is impossible for any lovers, while waiting for the consummation of their wishes, to enjoy a more uninterrupted felicity, than did sir Bazil and mr. Trueworth; — continually blest with the society of their dear mistresses, and receiving from them all the marks, that a virtuous affection could bestow, yet both of them found it requisite to contrive every day some new party of pleasure or other, in order to beguile the necessary, though to them tedious, time it took up in drawing of writings, and other preparations for the so much longed-for nuptials, which mrs. Wellair did not fail to do all on her part to hasten, being impatient to return to her family, whence she had been absent longer than she had intended.

Sir Bazil and mr. Trueworth having been taking a little walk in the park one morning, the former finding himself so near the habitation of miss Mabel, could not forbear calling on her; though she was to dine that day at his house, and mr. Trueworth readily accompanied him; that lady was then at her toilet, but made no scruple of admitting them into
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her dressing-room, where they had scarfeated themselves, when her woman, w^l was waiting, was called out by a footman to speak to some people, who, said, were very importunate to see m Mabel, and would take no answer fro him.

‘ Rude guests, indeed,’ cried miss Mbel, ‘ that will not take an anfwer from servant : — Who are they ?’ — ‘ I nev saw them before, madam,’ replied t footman ; ‘ but the one is a woman of very mean appearance, and the othe I believe, is a soldier : — I told the your ladyship had company, and cou not be seen ; but the man said, he or begged one word with you, — that was just come from abroad, and want to know where he might see his chil and a deal of such stuff : — the wom is almost as impertinent as the ma and I cannot get them from the doo

‘ I will lay my life upon it, madan said the waiting-maid, ‘ that this is t father of the child, that you and m Betsy Thoughtless have been so go to keep, ever since the mother’s deatl — ‘ I verily believe thou hast hit up the right,’ cried miss Mabel ; — ‘ thee go down, and if it be as ‘ imagi

' imaginest, bid them come up,— I will
' see them.'

The maid went as she was ordered, and immediately returned with two persons, such as the footman had described: — the woman was the first that advanced, and after dropping two or three curtseys to each of the company, addressed herself to miss Mabel in these words: — ' I do not know, madam,' said she, ' whether your ladyship may remember me, but I nursed poor mrs. Jinks, your ladyship's sempstress and clear-starcher, all the time of her lying-in, when your ladyship, and madam Betsy Thoughtless, were so good as to stand godmothers, and afterwards took the child, that it might not go to the parish.'

' I remember you very well,' replied miss Mabel; ' but pray what is your business with me now?' — ' Why, madam,' said she, ' your ladyship must know, that mrs. Jinks's husband has seen his folly at last, — has left the army, and is resolved to take up and settle in the world; — so, madam, if our ladyship pleases, he would willingly — his child.'

‘ O ! doubtless, he may have his child,’
rejoined miss Mabel ; — ‘ but hearkye,
‘ friend,’ continued she, turning to the
man, ‘ are you able to keep your child?’
‘ — Yes, madam,’ answered he, coming
forward, ‘ thank God, and good friends ;
‘ — I had an uncle down in Northamp-
tonshire, who died a while ago, and left
‘ me a pretty little farm there ; — and
‘ so, as my neighbour here was telling
‘ you, I would not have my child a bur-
‘ then to any body.’ — ‘ If we had
‘ thought it a burthen,’ said miss Mabel,
‘ we should not have taken it upon us ;
‘ — however, I am glad you are in cir-
‘ cumstances to maintain it yourself ; —
‘ your wife was a very honest, industri-
‘ ous woman, and suffered a great deal
‘ through your neglect, but I hope you
‘ will make it up in the care of the child
‘ she has left behind.’

‘ Aye, madam,’ replied he, wiping
his eyes, ‘ I have nothing else to remem-
ber her ; — I did not use her so well as
she deserved, that’s certain, but I have
sowed all my wild oats, as the saying
is, and I wish she were alive to have
the benefit of it’

‘ That

' That cannot be,' interrupted the woman, ' so don't trouble good madam with your sorrowful stories; — if her ladyship will be so good only to give us directions where to find the child, for we have been to madam Betsy's, and her ladyship was not at home, so we made bold to come here.' — ' Yes, madam,' cried he, ' for my colonel comes to town in a day or two, and I shall get my discharge, and have no more to do with the service, so would willingly have my child to take down with me to the farm.'

Miss Mabel made no other answer to this, than saying, it was very well, and immediately gave them the direction they requested, to Goody Bushman's, at Denham. — ' I cannot tell you exactly where the house is,' said she; ' but you will easily find her, the husband is a gardener, and she has been a nurse for many years?'

The fellow seemed extremely pleased, thanked her as well as he could in his homely fashion, and desired she would be so kind to give his duty to the other lady, and thank her also, for her part of the favours both his wife and child had

received, nor had he forgot his manners so far, as not to accompany these testimonies of his gratitude with a great many low scrapes, till he got quite out of the room.

After this sir Bazil began to grow a little pleasant with miss Mabel, concerning the motherly part she had been acting : — ‘ You do me more honour than I deserve,’ said she, laughing ; ‘ for it was but half a child I had to take care of, so consequently I could be but half a mother. — I am glad, however,’ continued she, more seriously, ‘ that my little god-daughter has found a father.’

While they were talking in this manner, the old gentleman happening to come in, and hearing sir Bazil was above with his daughter, sent to desire to speak with him in his closet.

Miss Mabel being now alone with mr. Trueworth, thought she saw something in his countenance, which very much surprised her, — ‘ You are pensive, sir,’ said she ; — ‘ I hope the mention we have been making of miss Betsy has given you no alarm.’ — ‘ A very great one,’ answered he ; ‘ but not on the account you may perhaps imagine : — ‘ hav

' have wronged that lady in the most
cruel manner ; — and though the injury
I have done her went no farther than
my own heart, yet I never can forgive
myself for harbouring sentiments, which
I now find were so groundless and un-
just.'

As it was not possible for miss Mabel to comprehend the meaning of these words, she intreated him, somewhat hastily, to explain the mystery they seemed to contain : on which he made no scruple of repeating to her the substance of the letter he had received ; — his going down to Denham, in order to convince himself more fully, and the many circumstances, which, according to all appearances, corroborated the truth of that infamous scandal.

Never was astonishment equal to that miss Mabel was in, on hearing the narrative of so monstrous a piece of villainy : — ' Good God ! ' cried she, ' I know miss Betsy has many enemies, who set all her actions in the worst light, and construe every thing she says and does into meanings she is ignorant of herself ; but this is so impudent, — so unparalleled a slander, as I could not have

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‘ thought the malice of either men or
vils could have invented.’

‘ Indeed, madam,’ said Mr. Truewo
‘ should fortune ever discover to me
‘ author of this execrable falsehood,
‘ know no revenge I could take, t
‘ would be sufficient, both for traduc
‘ the innocence of that lady, and the i
‘ position practised upon myself.’ — M
Mabel agreed with him, that no puni
ment could be too bad for the invent
of such cruel aspersions, and having
little vented her indignation on all v
were capable of the like practices ; —
‘ suppose then,’ said she, ‘ that it
‘ owing to this wicked story that you
‘ sisted your visits to miss Betsy.’

‘ Not altogether, madam,’ answe
he ; — ‘ I had long before seen it
‘ not in my power to inspire that I
‘ with any sentiments of the kind, t
‘ would make me happy in a mari
‘ state. — I loved her, but my rea
‘ combated with my passion, and got
‘ better.’

‘ I understand you, sir,’ replied I
‘ and though I hope, nay believe in
‘ soul, that poor miss Betsy is innoc
‘ as a vestal, yet I cannot but own,

' the too great gaiety of her temper, and
' the pride of attracting as many admirers
' as have eyes to behold her, hurries her
' into errors, which, if persevered in, can-
' not but be fatal, both to the peace and
' reputation of a husband ; — where you
' now are fixed you doubtless have a
' much better prospect of being truly
' happy. — It is however a great pity,
' methinks,' continued this amiable lady,
' that so many rare and ' excellent qua-
' lities, as miss Betsy is possessed of,
' should all be swallowed up and lost in the
' nonsensical vanity of being too generally
' admired.'

They had time for no more, — sir Bazil returned ; — he had only been sent for to examine the foul copy of the marriage articles, which the old gentleman had just brought from his lawyers, on purpose to shew it to him some time that day, and they now took their leave, that the lady might have time to dress ; — sir Bazil looking on his watch, said, it was then quarter past two, and they should dine three, so begged she would not waste much time in consulting her glass ; — added he, ‘ you know you have my charms for me.’ — ‘ And I am ashamed then,’ replied she, with a ‘ even before mr: Trueworth, to

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‘ confess, that I desire to have none for
‘ any other.’

He kissed her hand on this obliging speech, and ran hastily down stairs, followed by mr. Trueworth, whose temper had not yet quite recovered its accustomed vivacity.

C H A P. XIII.

*Seems to promise a very great change.
for the better, both in the humour
and conduct of miss Betsy, in regard
to those who professed themselves her
lovers.*

AS little as miss Betsy had accustomed herself to compare and judge of things, she wanted not the power, whenever it pleased her to have the will to do so : — the words of sir Frederick Fineer, on taking leave of her at his last visit, sunk pretty deeply into her mind, nor could she remember them without a mixture of surprise, resentment, and confusion. No man, excepting mr. Saveing, whose reasons for it she could not but allow were justifiable, had hitherto ~~ever~~ presumed

presumed to make his addresses to her in a clandestine manner, and sir Frederick Fineer seemed to her, of all men, to have the least excuse for doing so, and she would not have hesitated one moment to come into her brother Frank's opinion, that he was no other than an impostor, if the dependance she had on the good faith of mrs. Modely had not prevented her from entertaining such a belief.

Besides, all the pleasure her gay young heart as yet had ever been capable of taking in the conquests she had made, consisted in their being known, and this proceeding in sir Frederick was too mortifying to that darling propensity, to be easily forgiven, even though he should make it appear, that the motives on which he requested this secrecy was such as could not be dispensed with.

‘ What can the man mean ?’ said she :
• — I suppose, by his desiring his court-
• ship to me should be a secret, he in-
• tends a marriage with me should be so
• too ; — that I should live with him
• only as the slave of his loose pleasures ;
• and, though a lawful wife, pass me in
• the eyes of the world for a kept mis-
• tress. — Was ever such insolence ! —
• such an unparalleled insult, both on my

H 6. ‘ person

‘ person and understanding ! — Heaven
‘ be my witness, that it is only his qua-
‘ lity could induce me ; nay, I know not
‘ as yet whether even that would be
‘ sufficient to induce me to become his
‘ wife, and can he be so ridiculously vain
‘ as to imagine I would accept him on
‘ any cheaper terms, than that eclat his
‘ rank and fortune would bestow upon
‘ me ?’

She spent all that part of the night, which she could spare from sleep, in meditating on this affair, and at last came to a resolution of seeing him no more, whatever he might pretend in justification of his late request.

She also had it in her head to return unopened any letter he should send, but curiosity prevailed above her resentment in this point, and when his servant came in the morning, and presented her with his master’s compliments, and a billet at the same time, she had not the power of denying herself the satisfaction of seeing what excuse he would make : — the contents of it were as follow :

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 157

To the delight of my eyes, the life of my
desires, the only hope and joy of my
adoring soul, the divine miss
BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ Bright star of England !

‘ SINCE last I left your radiant presence, my mind has been all dark and gloomy, — my anxieties are unutterable, — intollerable ; — I know not what cruel constructions you may put upon the petition I made you, of not mentioning me to your brothers ; — but sure you cannot think I apprehend a refusal from that quarter : — no, — my birth and fortune set me above all doubts of that nature, and I am very certain, that both they, and all your kindred, would rather force you, if in your power, to accept the hand I offer ; but it is not to them, but to yourself alone I can submit to yield. — Heaven, ‘ tis true, is in possessing you, but then I would owe that heaven only to your love ; — you may think, perhaps, that this is too great a delicacy, but know, fair angel, that there is another motive, — a motive, which, though derived from the same source, binds me in a different way. — Fain would I court you, — fain marry you with all the pomp and splen-
‘ dor

‘ dor your superior beauty merits ; but
‘ neither my virtue, my honour, nor my
‘ religion will permit it : — the mystery
‘ is this :

‘ Upon examining into the cause, why
‘ we see so many jarring pairs united in
‘ the sacred yoke of matrimony, I found
‘ it wholly owing to the want of that true
‘ affection, which, to make perfect hap-
‘ piness, ought to precede the nuptial ce-
‘ remony, — that sordid interest, — the
‘ persuasions of friends, or some such sel-
‘ fish view, either on the one side or the
‘ other, had given the hand without the
‘ heart, and inclination had no share in
‘ beckoning to the altar.

‘ Being convinced of this truth by in-
‘ numerable examples, and resolved to
‘ avoid the fate of others, I made a vow,
‘ and bound myself by the most solemn
‘ imprecations never to marry any wo-
‘ man, how dear soever she might be to
‘ me, that would not assure me of her
‘ love, by flying privately with me to the
‘ altar, without consulting friends, or
‘ asking any advice, but of her own soft
‘ desires.

‘ This, my adorable charmer, being
‘ the case, I am certain you have too
‘ high

' high a sense of the duty owing to all
' that's holy, to exact from me a thing
' which you cannot be but certain, must
' entail eternal perdition on my perjured
' soul.

' Let us haste then to tie the blissful
' knot, and surprise our friends with a
' marriage they little dreamed of. — As
' Phœbus each night hurries himself into
' the lap of Thetis, to render his appear-
' ance more welcome the next day, so
' shall the next morning, after our mar-
' riage, behold us shine forth at once no-
' less gorgeous than the bright ruler of
' the day, dazzling the eyes of the ad-
' miring world.

' I am fired with the imagination, and
am wrapped in extacies unutterable, —
but will fly this evening to your divine
feet, where I hope to persuade you to
delay our mutual happiness no longer
than to-morrow, and exchange my pre-
sent appellation of lover into that of
husband, assuring yourself I shall then be,
as now, with the most consummate de-
votion to your all-conquering charms,

‘ Sweet goddes of my hopes,

‘ Your passionate adorer,

‘ And everlasting slave,

‘ F. FINEER.

‘ P.S.

‘ P.S. I beseech you will give necessary
‘ orders for preventing any impertinent
‘ intruder from breaking in upon our
‘ converse, for, exclusive of my vow,
‘ I should detest, as the poet says,

“ With noise and shew, and in a crowd
“ to woo,
“ For true felicity dwells but in two.
‘ Once more, my dear divinity,—adieu.’

Miss Betsy read this letter over several times, and made herself mistress of the sense, as she thought, of every part of it; — she had always found, in every thing he said or did, a great deal of the affected and conceited coxcomb; but in this, she imagined he discovered more of the designing knave: — the vow he mentioned was an excuse too shallow to pass on a discernment such as her’s; but her vanity still suggesting, that he was really in love with her, and that if he intended any villainy towards her, it was enforced by the violence of his passion, it came into her head, that there was a possibility of his being already married, or contracted, to some lady, whom he durst not break with, but being bent on gaining her at all events, he had formed this pretence of

vow, in order to gain her to a clandestine marriage; thinking, that after it was over, and there was no remedy, she would be content to live with him in a private manner, since it would then be impracticable for her to do so in a public one.

This indeed she could not be certain of, but she was so, that it did not become a woman of any family and character to receive the addresses of a man, how superior soever he might be in point of fortune, who either was ashamed, or had any other reasons to hinder him from avowing his passion to her relations.

She resolved therefore to put an end at once to a courtship, which, however high her expectations at first had been, she now saw no probability would afford her either honour or satisfaction.

She had no sooner fixed herself in this determination, than she went to her cabinet, with an intent to pack up all the letters she had received from him, and enclose them in one to Mrs. Modely; but recollecting, she had given one of them to her brother Frank, which he had not yet returned, she thought she would defer, 'till another opportunity, this testimony

To prevent, however, his troubling her with any more visits, messages, or epistles, she sat down to her escrutore, and immediately wrote her present sentiments to his agent, in the following terms :

To mrs. MODELY.

‘ Dear Modely,
‘ AS it is not my custom to write to men,
‘ except on business, of which I ne-
‘ ver reckoned love, nor the professions of
‘ it, any part, I desire you will tell sir
‘ Frederick Fineer, that the only way for
‘ him to keep his oath inviolated, is to
‘ cease entirely all farther prosecution of
‘ his addresses to me ; for as my birth
‘ and fortune, as well as my humour,
‘ set me above encouraging a secret cor-
‘ respondence with any man, on what
‘ pretence soever it may be requested; he
‘ may expect, nay assure himself, that on
‘ the next visit he attempts to make me,
‘ or letter or message he causes to be left
‘ for me, I shall directly acquaint my
‘ brothers with the whole story of his
‘ courtship, the novelty of which may
‘ possibly afford us some diversion.

‘ I thank you for the good I believe
‘ you intended me, in your recommen-
‘ dation of a lover, whose title and estate
‘ you might think had some charms in
‘ them, and the oddities of whose temper
‘ you were perhaps unacquainted with.

‘ I desire, however, you will hencefor-
‘ ward make no mention of him, but,
‘ whenever I send for you, confine your
‘ conversation to such matters as befits
‘ your vocation, for as to others I find
‘ you are but little skilled in what will
‘ please her, who is,

‘ Notwithstanding this raillery,

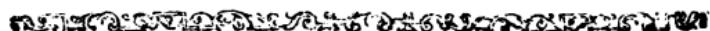
‘ My dear Modely,
‘ Your friend and servant,

‘ B. THOUGHTLESS.

‘ P.S. To shew how much I am in earnest,
‘ I should have sent the baronet all the
‘ epistles he has been at the pains of
‘ writing to me; but I am just going
‘ out, and have not leisure to look
‘ them up; — I will not fail, however,
‘ to let him have them in a day or
‘ two: — they may serve any other
‘ woman as well as me, and save him
‘ abundance of trouble in his next
‘ courtship. — You see I have some
‘ good-

' good-nature, though nothing of that love I suppose he imagined his merits had inspired me with. — Adieu.'

Miss Betsy was highly diverted, after sending this dispatch, to think how silly poor Modely would look, on finding herself obliged to deliver such a message to her grand lodger, and how dismally mortified he would be on the receiving it.



C H A P. XIV.

Show that miss Betsy, whenever she pleased to exert herself, had it in her power to be discreet, even on occasions the most tempting to her humour and inclination.

SOON after miss Betsy had sent away what she thought would be a final answer to sir Frederick, her brother Frank came in ; — she immediately shewed him the letter she had received that morning, and related to him in what manner she had behaved concerning it, with which he was extremely pleased, and said more tender things to her, than any she had heard from him, since he came to town.

• THE

' This is a way of acting, my dear sister,' said he, ' which if you persevere in, will infallibly gain you the esteem of all who know you ; for while you encourage the addresses of every idle fop, believe me, you will render yourself cheap, and lose all your merit with the sensible part of mankind.'

If she was not quite of his opinion in this point, she offered no arguments in opposition to the remark he had made, and assured him, as she had done once before, that she would never give any man the least grounds to hope she approved his pretensions, 'till she had first received the sanction of both his, and her brother Thoughtless's approbation.

He then told her, that they had received intelligence, that the India ship, which they heard was to bring Mr Edward Goodman, was safely arrived in the Downs ; so that in all likelihood that gentleman would be in London in two or three days at farthest ; — ' which I am very glad of,' said he ; ' for, though I believe the lawyer a very honest, diligent man as any can be of his profession, the presence of the heir will give a life

to

He also told her, that a gentleman his brother’s acquaintance had the day before received a letter from sir J Trusty, intimating, that he shoul be obliged, by the death of mr. Goo there being affairs of consequence betwix them, to come to town much soone he had intended, and that he s bring his lady with him :— ‘ And ‘ my dear sister,’ said he, ‘ you w ‘ happy for a time at least, in the ‘ versation and advice of one, who, ‘ certain, in her good wishes for yo ‘ serves to be looked upon by you, ‘ second mother.’

He was going on in some farther mendations of that worthy lady, miss Betsy’s man came to the dining door, and told her, that mr. M was below in the parlour, and woul be on her, if she was at leisure. — Francis perceiving she was hest what answser to make, cried h ‘ pray sister admit him : — this is . ‘ now I shall see how much he exce ‘ Trueworth in person and parts.’ ‘ never told you,’ answered she, ‘ t ‘ did so in either ; but perhaps he

' in his good opinion and esteem for me ;
' — however, I think you promised never
' to mention Truworth again to me ; —
' I wish you would keep your word.' —
' Well, — I have done,' said he, ' do
' not keep the gentleman waiting.' — On
which she bade the footman desire Mr.
Munden to walk up.

That gentleman was a good deal disconcerted in his mind, concerning the little progress his courtship had made with Miss Betsy ; — he had followed her for a considerable time, — been at a great expence in treating and making presents to her ; — he had studied her humour, and done every thing in his power to please her, yet thought himself as far from the completion of his wishes, as when he began his addresses to her ; — he had not for several days had an opportunity of speaking one word to her in private ; — she was either abroad when he came, or so engaged in company, that his presence served only to fill a vacant seat in her dining-room ; — he therefore determined to know what fate he was to expect from her.

As he had not been told any body was now with her, and had never seen Mr. Francis before, he was a little startled on his coming into the room, to find a young, gay

gay gentleman seated very near her, and lolling his arm, in a careless posture, over the back of the chair in which she was sitting ; — on his entrance, they both rose to receive him with a great deal of politeness, which he returned in the same manner ; but added to the first compliments, that he hoped he had been guilty of no intrusion.

‘ Not at all, sir,’ replied the brother of miss Betsy, ‘ I was only talking to my sister on some family affairs, which we may resume at any time, when no more agreeable subjects of entertainment fall in our way.’ — ‘ Yes, mr. Munden,’ said miss Betsy, ‘ this is that brother, whose return to town you so often heard me wish for : — and this, brother,’ continued she, turning to mr. Francis, ‘ is a gentleman who sometimes does me the honour of calling upon me, and whose visits to me I believe you will not disapprove.’

She had no sooner ended these words than the two gentlemen mutually advanced, embraced, and said they should be proud of each other’s acquaintance ; after which they entered into a conversation sprightly enough for the time it lasted, which was not long ; for mr. Francis looking on his watch said, he was extremely mortified to leave such good company, but business

A very urgent nature called him to a different place at that hour.

As much as Mr. Munden was pleased to find himself so obligingly introduced by his mistress, to the acquaintance of her brother, he was equally glad to be rid of him at this juncture, when he came prepared to press her so home to an eclaircissement, as should deprive her of all possibility of keeping himself any longer in suspense.

It was in vain for her now to have recourse to any of those evasions by which she had hitherto put him off, and she found herself under a necessity either of entirely discarding him, or giving him some kind of assurance, that the continuance of his pretensions would not be in vain.

Never had she been so plunged before, — never had any of her lovers insisted in such plain terms on her declaring herself, and she was compelled, as it were, to tell him, since he was so impatient for the definition of his fate, it was from her ~~knowers~~ he must receive it, for she was wed, nay had solemnly promised, to none no engagement without their judge and approbation. — ‘ But suppose,’
III. I

pose,' said he, ' I should be so happy
as to obtain their consent, may I then
assure myself you will be mine?' —
' Would you wish me to hate you?' cried
she, somewhat peevishly? — ' Hate me!'
answered he; — ' no, madam, it is your
love I would purchase, almost at the
expence of life.'

' Persecute me then no more,' said she,
to give you promises or assurances,
which would only make me see you
with confusion, and think of you with
regret; — it is sufficient I esteem you,
and listen to the professions of your love,
— let that content you, and leave to
myself the grant of more.' — ' Yet,
madam,' resumed he, — and was going
on, but was interrupted by the maid,
who came hastily into the room, and
said, ' Madam, here is miss Mabel.'

She had no sooner spoke these words,
than the lady she mentioned followed her
into the room. — Miss Betsy was never
more glad to see her than now, when her
presence afforded her so seasonable a re-
lief: — ' My dear miss Mabel,' said she,
this is kind indeed, when I already owe
you two visits.' — ' I believe you owe
me more,' answered she, with a smile;
but I did not come to reproach you.

‘ nor can this indeed be justly called a visit, since it is only a mere matter of business brings me hither at this time.’

Mr. Munden on this thought proper to take his leave, but, in doing so, said to miss Betsy, with a very grave air, — ‘ I hope, madam, you will have the goodness to consider seriously on what we have been talking of: — I will do myself the honour to wait upon your brothers to-morrow, and afterwards on yourself.’ — With these words he withdrew without staying for any answer.’

‘ I know not,’ said miss Mabel, after he was gone, ‘ whether what I have to say to you will be of sufficient moment to excuse me for depriving you of your company, — since I only called to tell you, that we are eased of our little pensioner at Denham, by the father’s unexpectedly coming to claim his own.’

Miss Betsy replied, that she guessed as much, for she had heard those people had been at her lodgings, when she was not at home, and had said somewhat of their business to her servant. — ‘ I am also to pay you,’ resumed the other, ‘ my quota of the last month’s nursing.’ — In speaking these words she took out of her pocket

the little sum she stood indebted for, and laid it on the table.

Though miss Betsy had the most perfect regard and good wishes for miss Mabel, and miss Mabel the same for miss Betsy, yet neither of them was in the secrets of the other: — they visited but seldom, and when they did, talked only on indifferent affairs. — In fine, though they both loved the amiable qualities each found in the other, yet the wide contrariety between their dispositions, occasioned a coolness in their behaviour, which their hearts were far from feeling.

Miss Mabel stayed but a very few minutes, after having dispatched the business she came upon, nor was miss Betsy at all troubled at her departure, being at present, what she very rarely was, in a humour rather to be alone than in any company whatever.

She no sooner was at liberty than she began to reflect on the transactions of that morning; — she had done two things, which seemed pretty extraordinary to her; — she had entirely dismissed one lover, a piece of resolution she did not a little value herself upon, but then she was ver-

at the too great encouragement, as she thought it, which she had given to another.

‘ What shall I do with this Munden?’ said she to herself. — ‘ If my brothers should take it into their heads to approve of his pretensions, I shall be as much teased on his account, as I was on that of Mr. Trueworth’s: — I have no aversion indeed to the man, but I am equally as far from having any love for him; — there is nothing in his person, or behaviour, that might make a woman ashamed of being his wife; yet I can see nothing so extraordinary in him, as to induce me to become so.’

‘ Why then,’ continued she, ‘ did I not tell him at once I would not have him, and that if he was weary of paying his respects to me, he might carry them where they would be more kindly received? — It was a very silly thing in me to send him to my brothers; — they are in such haste to get me out of the way of what they call temptation, that I believe they would marry me to any man, that was of a good family & had an estate. — If I must needs have a husband to please them, I had better have taken Trueworth, — I am sure there is no comparison between the

men; but it is too late to think of that now, for it is very plain, both by his behaviour to me when last I saw him, and by what he said to my brother Frank, that he has given over all intentions on that score.'

She was in the midst of these cogitations, when a servant belonging to the ladies whom she visited at St. James's, came and presented her with a letter, containing these lines :

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

Dear creature,
 MY sister and self had an invitation to a party of pleasure, where there will be the best company, — the best music, and the best entertainment in the world; but my father having unluckily forced her to pass some days with an old aunt, who lies dangerously sick at Hampstead, I know nobody can so well supply her vacant place, as your agreeable self; — therefore, if you are not already too deeply engaged this evening, would beg the favour of you to share with me in the proposed diversion: — we shall have two young gentlemen of rank for our conductors and protectors; — but I flatter myself you

Miss Betsy Thoughtless. 175

' will make no scruple to go any where
' with her, who is,

' With the most perfect amity,

' Dear miss Betsy,

' Your most humble,

' And most obedient servant,

' A. AIRISH.

' P.S. Let me know whether I can be
' so happy as to have you with me,
' and if so, I will call on you about
' five, and drink tea, for we shall not
' go to the assembly till eight.'

This proposal put miss Betsy out of all her serious reflections, and she returned for answer to the lady, that she would not fail to be at home, and ready to attend her at the appointed hour.

Accordingly, as soon as ever dinner was over, she went to dress, and thought of nothing but how to make as brilliant a figure as any she could meet with at the assembly. — Miss Airish came somewhat before the hour she had mentioned in her letter, accompanied by two rakes of quality whom miss Betsy had seen two or

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three times before with her and her sister, and by one of whom she had once been treated with some familiarities, which had made her ever since very cautious of giving him any opportunity to attempt the like.

As much, therefore, as she had pleased herself with the idea of this evening's pleasures, she no sooner saw who were to be their conductors, than she resolved not to put herself into their powers, yet knew not how, without affronting miss Airish, to avoid complying with the promises she had made of accompanying her.

They all came singing and romping into the room, but the perplexity of miss Betsy's mind made her receive them with a very serious air: — the men accosted her with a freedom conformable enough to their own characters, but not very agreeable to one of her's, and she rebuffed with a good deal of contempt him, with whom she had most reason to be offended.

‘Lord! how grave you look,’ said miss Airish, observing her countenance; ‘prithee, my dear creature, put on a more cheerful aspect: — this is to be a night of all spirit, — all mirth, — all gaiety.’ — ‘I am sorry I cannot be part

‘ taker of it,’ said miss Betsy, who, by this time, had contrived an excuse.— ‘ Lord ! what do you mean ? — not par-
‘ taker of it !’ cried miss Airish, hastily ;
‘ — sure you would not offer to disap-
‘ point us ? ’ — Not willingly,’ replied miss Betsy ; ‘ but I was just going to
‘ send to let you know, I have received
‘ a message from my elder brother, to
‘ come to his house, in order to meet
‘ some persons there, on very extraordi-
‘ nary business ; — but, I hope,’ added she, ‘ that my not going will be no hin-
‘ drance to the diversion you propose.’

‘ It would have been none, madam,’ said one of the gallants, ‘ if this assembly
‘ were like others ; but we are only a se-
‘ lect company of gay young fellows,
‘ who resolve to try how far nature may
‘ be exhilarated by regaling every sense,
‘ at once : — to prevent all quarrels, every
‘ man is to bring a lady with him, who
‘ is to be his partner in singing, — danc-
‘ ing, — playing, — or whatever they
‘ two shall agree upon. — We two,’ con-
‘ tinued he, ‘ pitched upon the two miss
‘ Aitishes, but one of them being gone,
‘ another way, we thought of you, other-
‘ wise we could have found ladies who
‘ would have obliged us.’

‘ Very likely,’ replied miss Betsy, ‘ and I suppose it may not yet be too late to seek them.’ — ‘ But I had rather have you than all the world,’ cried he; that miss Betsy was most apprehensive of, you know I have always shewn a particular tendre for you; — therefore privatee,’ continued he, catching her in his arms, and eagerly kissing her, ‘ my dear girl, send some excuse to your brother, and let us have you with us.’

‘ Unhand me, my lord,’ cried she, struggling to get loose, — ‘ what you ask is impossible, for I neither can nor will go.’ — The resolution with which she spoke these words, and the anger which at the same time sparkled in her eyes, made them see it would be but lost labour to endeavour to persuade her; — they looked one at another, and were confounded what to do, till miss Airish, vexed to the very heart at miss Betsy’s behaviour, hit upon an expedient to solve up the matter: — ‘ Well,’ said she, ‘ since miss Betsy cannot go, I will introduce your lordship to a young lady, who, I am sure, will not refuse us; — besides, I know she is at home, for I saw her looking out of her chamber window as

we

" we came by ; — but we must go directly, that she may have time to dress."

On this, they both cried with all their hearts, and one of them taking her hand skipped down stairs with her, in the same wild way they came up : — the other followed, only turning his head towards miss Betsy, cried, with a malicious sneer,

" How unregarded now that piece of
" beauty stands ! "

Miss Betsy, though sufficiently piqued, was very glad to get rid of them, and the more so, that by their happening to call on her, instead of her meeting them at miss Airish's appartment, she had the better opportunity of excusing herself from going where they desired.



C H A P. XV.

The terrible consequences, which may possibly attend our placing too great a dependance on persons whose principles we are not well assured of, are here exemplified; in a notable act of villainy and hypocrisy.

MISS Betty no sooner found herself alone, than she began to reflect very seriously on the preceding passage: — she knew very little of these two young noblemen, yet thought she saw enough in their behaviour to make any woman, who had the least regard for her honour or reputation, fearful to trust herself with them in any place, where both might be so much endangered; — she was, therefore, very much amazed, that miss Airish should run so great a risque, and to find that she did so, joined to some other things, which she had of late observed in the conduct of both the sisters, contributed to diminish the love and esteem she once had for them.

She found, however, too many objects of satisfaction in the visits she made to those ladies, to be willing to break acquaintance with them, and as she doubted not but that she had highly disobliged the one, by not complying with her invitation, and that this would infallibly occasion a rupture with the other also, if not in time reconciled, she went the next morning to their apartment, in order to make her peace.

On her enquiring for that lady, the footman told her, she was but just come home, and he believed was going to bed, but he would tell the chamber-maid she was there. — ‘No, — no,’ cried miss Betsey, ‘only give my compliments to your lady, and tell her, I will wait on her in the afternoon.’ — She was going away with these words; but miss Aristis, lying on the same floor, heard her voice, and called to her to come in.

Miss Betsey did as she was desired, and found her in a much better humour than she expected. — ‘O, my dear,’ said she, ‘what a night have you lost by not being with us! — Such a promiscuous enjoyment of every thing that can afford delight or satisfaction! — Well, after all,

• all, there is nothing like playing the
• rake a little sometimes, — it gives such
• a fillup to the spirits.'

‘ Provided it be innocent, I am of your
mind,’ replied miss Betsy ; — ‘ I sup-
pose every thing was managed with dec-
cency among you.’ — ‘ O quite so,’
cried the other ; — ‘ all harmless liber-
tinism : — ’tis true, there were private
rooms ; but you know one might
chuse whether one would go into them
or not.’ — ‘ I am not sure of that,’ said
miss Betsy : — ‘ I am glad however you
were so well pleased with your enter-
tainment, and equally so, that you were
not hindered from enjoying it, by my-
self not being able to share with you in it.’

‘ I am obliged to you, my dear,’ re-
plied miss Airish, — ‘ I was a little vexed
with you at first, indeed, but knew you
could not help it ; — the lady we called
upon went very readily with us, so as
it happened there was no disappoint-
ment in the case.’

‘ It was only to be convinced of that,’
said miss Betsy, ‘ that I came hither thus
early ; but I will now take my leave,
— repose I am sure is necessary for you,
after so many waking hours.’ — ‘ There
other

other did not oppose her departure; being in effect desirous of taking that rest, which her exhausted spirits wanted.

Never had miss Betsy felt within herself a greater or more sincere satisfaction, than she now did, for having so prudently avoided falling into inconveniences, the least of which, as she very rightly judged, would have been paying too dear a price for all the pleasures she could have received.

Sweet indeed are the reflections, which flow from a consciousness of having done what virtue, and the duty owing to the character we bear in life, exacted from us, but poor miss Betsy was not to enjoy, for any long time, so happy a tranquility;—she was roused out of this serenity of mind, by an adventure of a different kind from all she had ever yet experienced, and which, if she were not properly guarded against, it ought to be imputed rather to the unsuspecting goodness of her heart, than to her vanity, or that inadvertency, which had occasioned her former mistakes.

She was sitting near the window, leaning her arm upon the slab, very deep in contemplation, when, hearing a coach stop at

at the door, she looked out, imagining it might be somebody to her, and saw Mrs. Modely come out; — she wondered what business that woman should now come upon, after the letter she had sent her, and resolved to chide her for any impertinent message she should deliver.

Mrs. Modely, whose profession was known to the people of the house, always ran up without any other ceremony than asking if miss Betsy was at home and alone: — being now told she was so, she flew into the room, with a distraction in her countenance which very much surprised miss Betsy; but before she had time to ask the meaning, the oaken throwing herself down in a chair, increased her astonishment by these words:

‘ O ! madam,’ cried she, ‘ I am come to tell you of the saddest accident: — poor Mr. Frederick Fineer! — O that he had never seen you ! — O that I had never meddled between you ! — It is undone, that is to be sure, — ruined for ever : — I shall never get another lodger, — nay, I believe, I shall never recover the fright I am in.’

Here she burst into a violent fit of tears, and her sobs interrupting their

sage of her words, gave miss Betsy opportunity to enquire into the mystery of her behaviour: — ‘ For heaven’s sake, ‘ what is the matter,’ said that young lady? ‘ prithee cease these exclamations, ‘ and speak to be understood.’

‘ Ah, dear miss Betsy,’ resumed the other, ‘ I scarce know what I say or do, — poor Mr. Frederick has run himself quite through the body.’ — ‘ What! killed himself?’ cried miss Betsy hastily? — ‘ He is not dead yet,’ replied mrs. Modesty; but there lie the most dismal object that ever eyes beheld: the agonies of death in his face; — the sword sticking in his breast; for the surgeon says, that the moment that is drawn out of his life comes with it.’

Receiving miss Betsy said nothing, and looked a little troubled; she went on in this manner: — ‘ But this is not the worst I have to tell you, madam,’ continued she, — ‘ his death is nothing; but it is his soul; — his soul, miss Betsy: — hearing them say he could not live above three hours at most, I sent for a parson, — and there the good man sits and talks, and argues with him; — but, would you think it, he will not pray, nor be prayed for, — nor confess his sins,

‘ sins, — nor say he is sorry for what he has done, — nor do any thing that is right, till he has seen you.’

‘ Me!’ said miss Betsy, ‘ what would he see me for?’ — ‘ Nay, I know not, — but it is his whim, and he is obstinate, — therefore, my dear madam, in christian charity, and in compassion to his soul, hear what he has to

‘ What good can I do him by going, mrs. Modely,’ said miss Betty? ‘ none, as to his share in this world,’ answered she; — ‘ but, dear madam, consider the other, — think what a sad thing it is for a man to die without the rites of the church; — I’ll warrant he has sins enough upon him, as most young gentleman have, and sure you would not be the cause of his being miserable to all eternity! ’

‘ Indeed, mrs. Modely, I do not care to go,’ said miss Betsy. — ‘ The fight is very terrible indeed,’ cried the other, ‘ but you need not stay two minutes, — if you but just step in and speak to him, I fancy it will be enough; — but lord he may be dead while we are talking, and if he should leave the world in this manner, I should not be able

' live in my house, — and I have a lease
of eleven years to come, — I should
think I saw his ghost in every room ;
— so dear, dear miss Betsy, for my
sake; if not for his, go with me ; — I
came in a hackney-coach for haste, and
it is still at the door.'

' Well, Modely, you shall prevail,'
answered miss Betsy ; ' but you shall
stay in the room all the time I am there.'
— ' That you may be sure I will,' re-
turned the other ; — ' but come, — pray
' heaven we are not too late.'

They said little more to each other,
till they came to the house of mrs.
Modely, where the first sound that reached
the ears of miss Betsy, were groans,
which seemed to issue from the mouth of
the pangs of death.

Mrs. Modely led her into sir Frede-
rick's chamber, which was judiciously
kened; so as to leave light enough to
see objects, yet not so much as to
render them too perspicuous : — miss Betsy
saw him lying on the bed, as mrs. Modely
had bidden, with a sword sticking upright
in his breast, — a clergyman, and another
gentleman who appeared to be the surgeon,
standing near him. — ' Miss Betsy !

'so good,' said mrs. Modely, 'to come
' to visit you, sir Frederick.' — 'I am
' glad of it,' replied he, with a low voice,
' — pray, madam, approach.'

'I am sorry, sir Frederick, to find you
have been guilty of so rash an action,'
said miss Betsy, drawing towards the bed.
— 'I could not live without you,' re-
joined he, 'nor would die without leav-
ing you as happy as it is in my power
to make you; — I have settled two
thousand pounds a year upon you, dur-
ing your natural life; — but as I would
consult your honour in every thing I
do, and people might imagine I made
you this settlement in consideration of
some favours, which I had too true a
regard for you ever to desire, you must
enjoy it as my widow, and with the
title of lady Fineer.'

Miss Betsy was so much amazed at this
proposal, that she had not the power to
speak; but mrs. Modely cried out, 'Was
ever any thing so generous!' — 'Truly
noble indeed,' added the surgeon, 'and
worthy of himself, and the love he
has for this lady.' — 'Bless me!' said
miss Betsy, 'would you have me make
a dying man? — You ought, sir F.

'rick, to have other thoughts, as you
are going out of the world.'

'Aye, sir Frederick,' cried the parson,
'think of your immortal part.' — 'I
can think of nothing,' answered he,
groaning bitterly, 'of my own happiness,
'till I have fixed that of miss Betsy's.—
'Lord, madam,' cried mrs. Modely,
softly, 'you would not be so mad to re-
fuse : — what two thousand pounds a
year, and a ladyship, with liberty to
marry who you will ?'

'This is the most generous offer I
ever heard of,' said the parson ; 'but
I wish the lady would resolve soon, for
it is high time sir Frederick should pre-
pare for another world.' — 'He can-
not live above an hour,' rejoined the
surgeon, 'even if the sword is not with-
drawn ; — therefore, good madam,
think what you have to do.'

While they were speaking sir Frede-
rick redoubled his groans, and they went
on pressing her to accept the terms he
offered. — 'Do not plunge a man into
a sad eternity, merely for his love to
you,' said the parson. — 'All the world
would condemn you, should you refuse,'
said the surgeon. — 'A virgin widow
with

'with two thousand pounds a year,' added mrs. Modely.

In this manner did they urge her, and the parson getting on the one side of her, and the surgeon on the other, plied her so close with arguments, both on the advantages accruing to herself, and the compassion owing from her to a gentleman, who had committed this act of desperation on himself, merely through his love of her, that she neither could, nor knew how to make any answer, when sir Frederick giving two or three great groans, which seemed more deep than before, and the surgeon pretending to take miss Betsy's silence for consent, cried out, 'Madam, 'he is just going, — we must be speedy.' And then turning to the parson, 'Doctor,' said he, 'proceed to the ceremony, — 'pass over the prelude, and begin at the 'most essential part, else my patient won't 'live to the conclusion.'

The parson knew very well what he had to do, having his book ready, began at — 'sir Frederick Fineer, baronet, wilt 'thou have this woman to thy wedded 'wife?' — and so on. — To which sir Frederick answered, in the same dismal accents he had hitherto spoken, 'I will.' — Then the parson turning to miss

said, ‘Betsy Thoughtless, wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband?’ — and so forth.— Miss Betsy in the confusion of her mind, not well knowing what she said, or did, replied in the affirmative, on which he was hurrying over the rest of the ceremony, but she recollecting herself, cried out, — ‘ Hold, doctor, I cannot be married in this manner.’ — But he seemed not to regard her words, but read on, and the surgeon taking hold of her hand, and joining it with sir Frederick’s, held it in spite of her resistance, ‘till the ring was forced upon her finger.

This action so incensed her, that the instant she got her hand at liberty, she plucked off the ring, and threw it on the ground: — ‘What do you mean,’ said she? — ‘Do you think to compel me to a marriage? — Modely, you have not used me well.’ — With these words she was turning to go out of the room, but perceived, not till then, that mrs. Modely had slipped out, and that the door was locked; — she then began to call, ‘Mrs. Modely, — mrs. Modely:’ to which no answer was made.

‘Come, come, madam,’ said the surgeon, ‘this passion will avail you nothing; — you

' — you are effectually married, whatever you may imagine to the contrary.' 'Yes, yes,' rejoined the parson, ' the ceremony is good and firm : — I will stand to what I have done before any bishop in England.' — ' There wants only consummation,' cried the surgeon, ' and that we must leave the bridegroom to compleat before he dies.' — With these words they both went out, making the door fast after them.

Miss Betsy made use of her most efforts to pass at the same time they did, but they pushed her back with so much violence, as almost threw her down, and sir Frederick at the same time jumping off the bed, and throwing away the sword, which she imagined sheathed in his body, catched her suddenly in his arms.

'Tis hard to say, whether rage for the imposition she now found had been practised on her, or the terror for the danger she was in, was the passion now most predominant in the soul of miss Betsy ; but both together served to inspire her with unusual strength and courage.

' Your resistance is in vain,' cried he, ' you are my wife, and as such I enjoy you : — no matter whether

‘ your will or not.’ — She made no answer to these words, but collecting all her force, sprung from him, and catching hold of one of the posts at the bed’s foot, clung so fast round it, that all his endeavours to remove her thence were ineffectual for some moments, though the rough means he made use of for that purpose, were very near breaking both her arms.

Breathless at last, however, with the continual shrieks she had sent out for help, and the violence she had sustained by the efforts of that abandoned wretch, who had as little regard to the tenderness of her sex, as to any other principle of humanity, she fell almost fainting on the floor; and was on the point of becoming a victim to the most wicked stratagem that ever was invented, when on a sudden the door of the chamber was burst open, and a man, with his sword drawn, at that instant rushed in upon them:

‘ Monster!’ cried he, that entered, ‘ what act of villainy are you about to perpetrate?’ — Miss Betty rising from the ground at the same time, said to him, ‘ Oh! whoever you are, that heaven has sent to my deliverance, save me, I conjure you, from that horrid wretch.’

— ‘ Fear nothing, madam,’ answered he. He had time for no more, the intended ravisher had snatched up his sword, and was advancing towards him with these words, ‘ That woman is my wife,’ said he ; ‘ how dare any one interfere between us ? ’ — ‘ O, ’tis false ! — ’tis false ! — ‘ believe him not,’ cried miss Betsy. — Her protector made no reply, but flying at his antagonist, immediately closed with him, wrenched the sword out of his hand, which, throwing on the ground, he set his foot upon, and snapped it in pieces.

The obscurity of the room, joined to the excessive agitations miss Betsy was in, had, ’till now, hindered her from discovering, either by the voice or person, who it was to whom she owed her safety ; on his drawing back one of the window curtains to give more light into the place, that he might see with whom he had been engaged, she presently saw, to her great amazement and confusion, that her deliverer was no other than mr. Trueworth,

But how great soever was her astonishment, that of mr. Trueworth was not less, when looking on the face of the pretended sir Frederick Fineer, he presently knew him to be a fellow, who had served in quality of valet de chambre to a

leman he was acquainted with in France, who had robbed his master, and only through his lenity and compassion had avoided the punishment his crimes deserved.

' Rascal !' cried mr. Trueworth, ' have you escaped breaking on the wheel at Paris, to attempt deeds more deserving death in England.' — The wretch, who hitherto had behaved with a very lofty air, now finding he was discovered, fell at Trueworth's feet, and begged he should have mercy on him ; — alledged, that what he had done was occasioned by mere necessity ; — said, he was told the lady had a great fortune, and might be easily gained, and such like stuff, which putting mr. Trueworth beyond all patience, he gave him three or four blows with the flat of his sword, before he sheathed it, saying, at the same time, —

' Execrable dog ! — if thou wert not unworthy of death from any hand but that of the common hangman, thou shouldst not live a moment to boast the least acquaintance with this lady.'

Then turning to miss Betsy, who was half dying with the various emotions she was possessed off : — ' Madam,' said he, ' I will not ask by what means you came to this villain's company, only p—'

• mit me to conduct you hence, and see
• you safely home.'

Miss Betsy was seized with so violent a fit of trembling through all her frame, that she had neither voice to thank him, for the extraordinary assistance she had received from him, nor strength enough to bear her down stairs, if he had not with the greatest politeness and most tender care, supported her at every step she took.

They found no creature below, the house seemed as if forsaken by all its inhabitants ; but the parlour door being open, Mr. Trueworth placed his fair charge in an easy chair, while he ran to find somebody to get a coach.

After much knocking and calling, Mrs. Modely came out of a back-room, into that where Miss Betsy was. — As soon as that young lady saw her, ‘ Oh, Mrs. Modely,’ cried she, ‘ I could not have believed you would have betrayed me in this cruel manner.’ — ‘ Bless me ! madam,’ replied she, in a confusion, ‘ which she in vain endeavoured to conceal ; — ‘ I know not what you mean. —

I betray you ! — When you were talking with Sir Frederick I was sent for out, when I came back, indeed, I saw

‘ part

' parson and the surgeon pass through the entry in a hurry, and at the same time hearing a great noise, was going up as soon as I had pulled off my things ; but I hope,' continued she, in a whining tone, ' nothing has happened to my dear miss Betsy.' — ' Whatever has happened,' said mr. Trueworth, fiercely, ' will be inquired into ; — in the mean time, all we require of you is to send somebody for a coach.'

Mrs. Modelly then ringing a bell, a maid servant appeared, and what mr. Trueworth had requested was immediately performed ; but, though miss Betsy now saw herself safe from the mischief which had so lately threatened her, she had still emotions very terrible to sustain, and would have, doubtless, thrown her into a swoon, if not vented in a violent flood of tears.

Being arrived at the house where miss Betsy lodged, just as mr. Trueworth was helping her out of the coach, they were met by the two mr. Thoughtless's coming out of the door : — they started back at a sight, which, it must be confessed, had something very alarming in it ; — they beheld their sister all pale and trembling, — her eyes half drowned in tears,

— her garments torn, — her hair hanging loosely wild about her neck and face, — every token of despair about her, — and in this condition conducted by a gentleman, a stranger indeed to the one, but known by the other to have been once passionately in love with her, might well occasion odd sort of apprehensions in both the brothers; especially in the younger.

The sudden sight of her brothers, made a fresh attack on the already so much weakened spirits of miss Betsy, and she would have sunk on the threshold of the door, as mr. Trueworth quitted her hand in order to present it to mr. Francis, if the elder mr. Thoughtless, seeing her totter, had not that instant catched her in his arms.

‘ Confusion! ’ cried mr. Francis, ‘ what does all this mean? — Trueworth, is it thus you bring my sister home? — ‘ I am heartily sorry for the occasion,’ — said mr. Trueworth, ‘ since — He was going on, but mr. Francis, fired with a mistaken rage, prevented him, crying out, ‘ ’Sdeath, sir, how came you with my sister? ’ — Mr. Trueworth, a little provoked to find the service he had done ill requited, replied in a disdainful tone, ‘ she will inform you, — after that,

' you have any farther demands upon me,
' you know where I am to be found; —
' I have no leisure now to answer your
' interrogatories.'

With these words he stepped hastily into the coach, and ordered to be drove to the two red lamps in Golden Square.

Miss Betsy's senses were entirely lost for some moments, so that she knew nothing of what had passed: — mr. Francis hearing what directions mr. Trueworth had given the coachman, was for following and forcing him to an explanation, but the elder mr. Thoughtless prevailed on him to stay till they should hear what their sister would say on this affair.

She was carried into her apartment, rather dead than alive, but being laid on a settee, and proper means applied, she soon returned to a condition capable of satisfying their curiosity.



~~CHARACTER AND CONVERSATION OF~~

C H A P. XVI.

Will not tire the reader.

MISS Betsy having her heart and head full of the obligation she had to Mr. Truworth, and on the first recovery of her senses, thinking he was still near her, cried out, — ‘ Oh! Mr. Truworth, how shall I thank the goodness you have shewn me! — I have no words to do it, — it is from my brothers you must receive those demonstrations of gratitude, which are not in my power to give.’

The brothers looked sometimes on her, and sometimes on each other, with a good deal of surprise all the time she was speaking, ’till perceiving she had done, — ‘ To whom are you talking, sister?’ said Mr. Francis, ‘ here is nobody but my brother and myself.’

‘ Blefs me!’ cried she, looking round the room, ‘ how wild my head is! — I knew not where I was, — I thought myself still in the house of that wicked woman that betrayed me, and saw the general

' generous deliverer chastising the monster
that attempted my destruction.'

' Who was that monster ?' demanded
the elder mr. Thoughtless, hastily.
' A villain without a name,' said she,
' for that of sir Frederick Fineer was but
assumed, to hide a common cheat ! —
a robber ! ' — ' And who, say you,' re-
joined mr. Francis, ' was your deliverer ?'
' Who, but that best of men ! ' answered
she, ' mr. Trueworth ! — O, brothers,
if you have any regard for me, or for
the honour of our family, you can ne-
ver too much revere, or love the ho-
nour, and the virtue of that worthy
man.'

' You see, Frank, how greatly you
have been to blame,' said the elder mr.
Thoughtless, ' and how much more so
you might have been, if I had not dis-
swaded you from following that gentle-
man, who, I now perceive, was the fa-
viour, not the invader of our sister's in-
nocence.' — ' I blush,' replied mr.
Francis, ' at the remembrance of my
rashness, — I ought, indeed, to have
known Trueworth better.'

There passed no more between them on
this subject, but on finding miss Betsy

grew more composed, and able to continue a conversation, they obliged her to repeat the particulars of what had happened to her, which she accordingly did, with the greatest veracity imaginable, omitting nothing of moment in the shocking narrative.

The calling to mind a circumstance so detestable to her natural delicacy, threw her, however, into such agonies, which made them think it their province, rather to console her under the affliction she had sustained, than to chide her for the inadvertency that had brought it on her.

They stayed supper with her, which, to save her the trouble of ordering, Mr. Thoughtless went to an adjacent tavern, and gave directions for it himself, — made her drink several glasses of wine, and both of them did every thing in their power to cheer and restore her spirits to their former tone, after which they retired and left her to enjoy what repose the present anxieties of her mind would permit her to take.

Though the condition Miss Betsy was in, made these gentlemen treat her with the abovementioned tenderness, yet both of them were highly incensed against her.

for so unadvisedly encouraging the pretensions of a man, whose character she knew nothing of, but from the mouth of a little mantua-maker ; — her consenting to sup with him at the house of that woman, and afterwards running with her into his very bed-chamber, were actions, which to them seemed to have no excuse.

Mr. Francis, as of the two having the most tender affection for her, had the most deep concern in whatever related to her : — ‘ If she were either a fool,’ said he, stamping with extremity of vexation, ‘ or of a vicious inclination, her conduct would leave no room for wonder ; — but for a girl, who wants neither wit nor virtue, to expose herself in this manner, has something in it inconsistent ! — unnatural ! — monstrous !’

‘ I doubt not,’ cried he again, ‘ if the truth could be known, that it was some such ridiculous adventure as this, that lost her the affection of Mr. Trueworth, though her pride and his honour joined to conceal it.’

The elder Mr. Thoughtless was entirely his brother’s opinion in all these points, both of them now were more confirmed

firmed than ever, that marriage was the only sure guard for the reputation of a young woman of their sister's temper.— Mr. Munden had been there the day before, and, as he had told miss Betsy he would do, declared himself to them; so it was resolved between them, that if, on proper enquiry, his circumstances should be found such as he said they were, to clap up the wedding with all imaginable expedition.

But no business, how important or perplexing soever it may be, can render gratitude and good-manners forgotten, or neglected, by persons of understanding and politeness; these gentlemen thought a visit to mr. Truworth neither could nor ought to be dispensed with, in order to make him those acknowledgments the service he had done their sister demanded from them.

Accordingly, the next morning mr. Thoughtless, accompanied by his brother, went in his own coach, which he made be got ready, as well in respect to himself, as to the person he was going to visit.

They found mr. Truworth at home, who, doubtless, was not without some

expectation of their coming ; — on their sending up their names, he received them at the top of the stair-case with so graceful an affability, and sweetness in his air, as convinced the elder mr. Thoughtless, that the high character his brother Frank had given of that gentleman, was far from exceeding the bounds of truth.

It is certain, indeed, that mr. True-worth, since the eclaircissement of the Denham affair, had felt the severest remorse within himself, for having given credit to that wicked asperion cast upon miss Betsy, and the reflection, that fortune had now put it in his power to atone for the wrong he had been guilty of to that lady, by the late service he had done her, gave a secret satisfaction to his mind, that diffused itself through all his air, and gave a double sprightliness to those eyes, which, by the report of all who ever saw him, stood in need of no addition to their lustre.

The elder mr. Thoughtless having made his compliments on the occasion, which had brought him thither, the usher advanced, though with a look newwhat more downcast than ordinary :
‘ I know not, sir,’ said he, ‘ whether my testimonies of the gratitude I owe
‘ you

• you will be acceptable, after the folly
• into which a mistaken rage transported
• me last night.' — 'Dear Frank,' cried
mr. Trueworth, smiling, and giving him
his hand, in token of a perfect reconcilia-
tion, 'none of these formal speeches, —
• we know each other, — you are by na-
ture warm, and the little philosophy I
• am master of, makes me think what-
ever is born with us pleads its own ex-
cuse ; — besides, to see me with your
sister in the condition she then was, en-
tirely justifies your mistake.' — 'Dear
Trueworth,' replied the other, embrac-
ing him, 'you are born every way
to overcome.'

Mr. Thoughtless returning to some ex-
pressions of his sense of the obligation he
had conferred upon their whole family :
— 'Sir, I have done no more,' said mr.
Trueworth, 'than what every man of
honour would think himself bound to
do for any woman in the like distress,
much more for a lady so deserving as
mifs Betsey Thoughtless. — I happened
almost miraculously to be in the same
house with her, when she stood in need
of assistance, and I shall always place
the day in which my good stars con-
ducted me to the rescue of her innocence:

among

‘ among the most fortunate ones of my
whole life.’

In the course of their conversation, the brothers satisfied Mr. Trueworth’s curiosity, by acquainting him with the means by which their sister had been seduced into the danger he had so happily delivered her from, and Mr. Trueworth in his turn informed them of the accident that had so seasonably brought him to her relief; which latter, as the reader is yet ignorant of, ‘tis proper should be related.

‘ Having sent,’ said he, ‘ for my steward to come to town, on account of some leases I am to sign, the poor man had the misfortune to break his leg as he was stepping out of the stagecoach, and was carried directly to Mrs. Modely’s, where, it seems, he has formerly lodged; — this casualty obliged me to go to him: — as a maid servant was shewing me to his room, which is up two pair of stairs, I heard the rustling of silks behind me, and casting my eyes over the bannister, I saw Miss Betsy, and a woman with her, who I since found was Mrs. Modely, pass hastily into a room on the first floor.’

“ A

‘ A curiosity,’ contined he, ‘ which I cannot very well account for, induced me to ask the nurse, who attends my steward, what lodgers there were below?’ — To which she replied, that they said he was a baronet, but that she believed nothing of it, for the two fellows that passed for his servants were always with him, and she believed eat at the same table, for they never dined in the kitchen: — ‘ besides,’ said she, ‘ I have seen two or three shabby, ill-looked men, that have more the appearance of pick-pockets, than companions for a gentleman, come after him, and, indeed, I believe he is no better than a rogue himself.’

‘ Though I was extremely sorry,’ pursued Mr. Trueworth, ‘ to find miss Betsy should be the guest of such a person, yet I could not forbear laughing at the description this woman gave of him; which, however, proved to be a very just one.—I had not been there above half an hour, before I heard the shrieks of a woman, and fancied, the voice of miss Betsy, though I had never heard it made use of in that manner; — I went however to the top of the staircase, where hearing the cries redoubled,

‘ I drew my sword, and ran down ; the door of the chamber was locked, but setting my foot against it, I easily burst it open, and believe entered but just in time to save the lady from violation.’

‘ On seeing the face,’ added he, ‘ of this pretended baronet, I immediately knew him to be a fellow that waited on a gentleman I was intimate with at Paris.—What his real name is I either never heard or have forgot ; for his master never called him by any other, than that of Quaint, on account of the romantic and affected fashion in which he always spoke :—the rascal has a little smattering of Latin, and I believe has dipped into a good many of the ancient authors ;—he seemed indeed to have more of the fop than the knave in him, but he soon discovered himself to be no less the one than the other, for he ran away from his master, and robbed him of things to a considerable value :—he was pursued and taken, but the gentleman permitted him to make his escape, without delivering him into the hands of justice.’

After this mutual recapitulation, the two brothers began to consider what was to

to be done for the chastisement of the villain, as the prosecuting him by law would expose their sister's folly, and prove the most mortal stab that could be given to her reputation : — the one was for cutting off his ears, — the other for pinning him against the wall of the very chamber where he had offered the insult ; to which mr. Trueworth replied, ‘ I must confess ‘ his crime deserves much more than ‘ your keenest resentments can inflict, but ‘ these are punishments which are only ‘ the prerogative of law, to which, as you ‘ rightly judge, it would be improper to ‘ have recourse : — I am afraid therefore ‘ you must content yourselves with barely ‘ caning him ; — that is,’ continued he, ‘ if he is yet in the way for it, but I ‘ shrewdly suspect he has before now ‘ made off, as well as his confederates, ‘ the parson, and the surgeon ; — how- ‘ ever I think it would be right to go to ‘ the house of this Modely, and see what ‘ is to be done.’

To this they both readily agreed, and they all went together ; but as they were going, — ‘ O ! what eternal plagues,’ said mr. Francis, ‘ has the vanity of this girl ‘ brought upon all her friends ? ’ — ‘ You ‘ will still be making too hasty reflections,

tried mr. Trueworth ; — ‘ I hope to see miss Betsy one day as much out-shine the greatest part of her sex in prudence, as she has always done in beauty.’

By this time they were at mrs. Modely’s door ; but the maid, whom she had tutored for the purpose, told them, that sir Frederick Fineer was gone ; — that he would not pay her mistress for the lodgings, because she had suffered him to be interrupted in them ; — and that she was sick in bed with the fright of what had happened, and could not be spoke to.

On this mr. Trueworth ran up to his steward’s chamber, not doubting but he should there be certainly informed whether the mock baronet was gone or not ; — the two mr. Thoughtlesses waited in the parlour till his return, which was immediately, with intelligence, that the wretch had left the house soon after himself had conducted miss Betsy thence.

They had now no longer any business here ; but the elder mr. Thoughtless could not take leave of mr. Trueworth without entreating the favour of seeing him at his house : to which he replied, that he believed he should not stay long in town, and while he did so, had busi-

ness

ness that very much engrossed his time, but at his return should rejoice in an opportunity of cultivating a friendship with him. — With this, and some other compliments they separated ; — the two brothers went home, and mr. Trueworth went where his inclinations led him.

C H A P. XVII.

Love in death, — an example rather to be wondered at than imitated.

ON mr. Trueworth's going to sir Basil's, he found the two ladies with all the appearance of the most poignant grief in their faces : — mrs. Wellair's eyes were full of tears, but those of her lovely sister seemed to flow from an exhaustless spring.

This was a strange phœnomenon to mr. Trueworth ; — it struck a sudden damp upon the gaiety of his spirits, and he had but just recovered his surprize enough to ask the meaning, when mrs. Wellair prevented him, by saying, ‘ O ! mr. True-
‘ worth, we have a melancholly account
‘ to give you ; — poor mrs. Blanchfield,
‘ no more.’

‘ Dear

‘ Dead! ’ — cried he. — ‘ Dead,’ repeated miss Harriot ; — ‘ but the manner of it will affect you most.’ — ‘ A much less motive,’ replied he, ‘ if capable of giving pain to you, must certainly affect me ; — but I beseech you, madam,’ continued he, ‘ keep me not in suspence.’

‘ You may remember,’ said miss Harriot, sighing, ‘ that some time ago we told you, that mrs. Blanchfield had taken leave of us, and was gone down to Windsor ; — it seems she had not been long there before she was seized with a disorder, which the physicians term a fever on the spirits : — whatever it was, she lingered in it for about three weeks, and died yesterday ; — some days before she sent for a lawyer, and disposed of her effects by will : — she also wrote a letter to me, which last she put into the hands of a maid, who has lived with her almost from her infancy, binding her by the most solemn vow to deliver it to me, as soon as possible after she was dead, and not ’till then, on any motive whatsoever.’

“ The good creature,” pursued miss Harriot, “ hurried up to town this morning,

‘ ing, to perform her lady’s last injunc-
‘ tions : — this is the letter I received
‘ from her,’ continued she, taking it out
of her pocket, and presenting it to him,—
‘ read it, and join with us in lamenting
‘ the fatal effects of a passion people take
‘ so much pains to inspire.’

The impatience mr. Trueworth was in,
for the full explanation of a mystery,
which, perhaps, he had some guess into
the truth of, hindered him from making
any answer to what miss Harriot had said
upon the occasion ; — he hastily opened
the letter, and found in it these lines :

To miss HARRIOT Lovit.

‘ Dear happy friend,

‘ AS my faithful Lucy at the same time
‘ she delivers this into your hands,
‘ brings you also the intelligence of my
‘ death, the secret it discovers cannot
‘ raise in you any jealous apprehensions :
‘ — I have been your rival, my dear Har-
‘ riot, but when I found you were mine,
‘ wished you not to lose what I would
‘ have given the world, had I been mis-
‘ tress of it, to have gained ; — the first
‘ moment I saw the too agreeable mr.
‘ Trueworth, something within told me
‘ he was my fate ; — that according

‘ appeared in his eyes I must either be
‘ happy or no more ; — it has proved the
‘ latter, — death has seized upon my
‘ heart, but cannot drive my passion
‘ thence : — whether I shall carry it be-
‘ yond the grave I shall know before this
‘ reaches you, but at present I think it is
‘ so incorporated with my immortal part,
‘ as not to be separated by the dissolution
‘ of my frame.

‘ I will not pretend to have had so
‘ much command over myself, as to re-
‘ frain taking any step for the forwarding
‘ my desires ; — before I was convinced
‘ of his attachment to you, I caused a let-
‘ ter to be wrote to him, making him an
‘ offer of the heart and fortune of a
‘ person, unnamed indeed, but mentioned
‘ as one not altogether unworthy of his
‘ acceptance : — this he answered as re-
‘ quested, and ingenuously confessed, that
‘ the whole affections of his soul were al-
‘ ready devoted to another, — I had then
‘ no more to do with hope, nor had any
‘ thing to attempt but the concealing my
‘ despair ; — this made me quit London,
‘ and all that was valuable to me in it.
‘ — I flattered myself, alas ! that time
‘ and absence would restore my reason ;
‘ — but, as I said before, my doom was
‘ fixed, — irrevocably fixed ! and I soon
‘ found

‘ found, by a thousand symptoms of an
‘ inward decay, that to be sensible of that
‘ angelic man’s perfections, and to live
‘ without him, are things incompatible in
‘ nature ; — even now, while I am writ-
‘ ing, I feel the icy harbingers of death
‘ creep through my veins, benumbing as
‘ they pass ; — soon, — very soon shall I
‘ be reduced to a cold lump of senseless
‘ clay ; — indeed I have now no wish for
‘ life, nor business to transact below. —
‘ I have settled my worldly affairs, and
‘ disposed of the effects that heaven has
‘ blessed me with, to those I think most
‘ worthy of them. — My last will is in
‘ the hands of mr. Markland the lawyer, —
‘ I hope he is an honest man ; but least
‘ he should prove otherwise, let mr. True-
‘ worth know, I have made him master
‘ of half that fortune, which once I should
‘ have rejoiced to have laid wholly at his
‘ feet ; — all my jewels I entreat you to
‘ accept, — they can add nothing to your
‘ beauty, but may serve to ornament your
‘ wedding garments ; — Lucy has them
‘ in her possession, and will deliver them
‘ to you.

‘ And now, my dear miss Harriot, I
‘ have one favour to beg of you, and that
‘ is, that you exert all the influence your
‘ merits claim over the heart of mr. True-

‘ worth

‘ worth, to engage him to accompany
‘ you in seeing me laid in earth. — I
‘ know your gentle generous nature too
‘ well to doubt you will deny me this re-
‘ quest, and the very idea, that you will
‘ ask, and he will grant, gives, methinks,
‘ a new vigour to my enfeebled spirits.
‘ — O ! if departed souls are permitted,
‘ as some say they are, to look down on
‘ what passes beneath the moon, how will
‘ mine triumph, — how exult, to see my
‘ poor remains thus honoured! — thus at-
‘ tended ! — I can no more but this, —
‘ may you make happy the best of men,
‘ and may he make you the happiest of
‘ women. — Farewell, — eternally fare-
‘ well, — be assured, that as I lived, so I
‘ die,

‘ With the greatest sincerity,

‘ Dear miss Harriot,

‘ Your’s, &c.

‘ J. BLANCHFIELD.

• P.S. Be so good to give my last adieu
‘ to my dear mrs. Wellair ; — she will
‘ find I have not forgot her, nor my
‘ little godson, in my bequests.’

How would the vain, unthinking fop, have exulted on such a proof of his imagined merit? — how would the sordid avaritious man, in the pleasure of finding so unexpected an accession to his wealth, have forgot all compassion for the hand that gave it! — Mr. Truworth, on the contrary, blushed at having so much more ascribed to him, than he would allow himself to think he deserved, and would gladly have been deprived of the best part of his fortune, rather than have received an addition to it by such fatal means.

The accident, however, was so astonishing to him, that he scarce believed it real, nor could what he read in the letter, under her own hand, nor all mrs. Wellair, and miss Harriot alledged, persuade him to think, at least to acknowledge, that the lady's death was owing to a hopeless flame for him.

While they were speaking sir Bazil came in; — he had been at home when his sister received the letter, and had heard what Lucy said of her mistress's indisposition, and was therefore no stranger to any part of the affair.

Well

‘ Well, Trueworth,’ said he to that gentleman, ‘ I have often endeavoured to emulate, and have even envied the great talents you are master of, but am now reconciled to nature for not bestowing them on me, lest they might prove of the same ill consequence to some woman as your’s has been to mrs. Blanchfield.’

‘ Dear sir Bazil,’ replied mr. Trueworth, ‘ do not attempt to force me into an imagination, which would render me at once both vain and wretched. — Chance might direct the partial inclination of this lady to have kinder thoughts of me than I could either merit or return, but I should be loth to believe, that they have produced the sad event we now lament.’

‘ I am of opinion, indeed,’ said sir Bazil, ‘ that there are many who deceive themselves, as well as the world, in this point. — People are apt to mistake that for love, which is only the effect of pride for a disappointment ; but it would be unjust to suppose this was the case with mrs. Blanchfield : — the generous legacy she has bequeathed to you, and the tenderness with which she treats my sister, leaves no room to suspect her soul

‘ was tainted with any of those turbulent emotions, which disgrace the name of love, and yet are looked upon as the consequences of that passion ; — she knew no jealousy, — harboured no revenge, — the affection she had for you was simple and sincere, and meeting no return preyed only upon herself, and by degrees consumed the springs of life.’

‘ I am glad, however,’ said the elder sister of sir Bazil, ‘ to find that mr. Trueworth has nothing to reproach himself with, on this unhappy score ; — some men, on receiving a letter of the nature he did, would through mere curiosity of knowing on whose account it came, have sent an answer of encouragement ; — it must be owned, therefore, that the command he had over himself in this act of generosity to his unknown admirer, demanded all the recompence in her power to make.’

Mr. Trueworth, whose modesty had been sufficiently wounded in this conversation, hastily replied, ‘ Madam, what you by an excess of goodness are pleased to call generosity, was, in effect, no more than a piece of common honesty : — the man capable of deceiving a woman, who regards him, is no less a villain

‘ villain, than he who defrauds his neighbour of the cash intrusted in his hands : — the unfortunate mrs. Blanchfield did me the honour to depend on my sincerity and secrecy ; — I did but my duty in observing both, — and she, in so highly over-rating that act of duty, shewed indeed the magnanimity of her own mind, but adds no merit to mine.’

‘ I could almost wish it did not,’ said miss Harriot, sighing. — ‘ Madam !’ cried mr. Trueworth, looking earnestly on her, as not able to comprehend what she meant by these words. — ‘ Indeed,’ resumed she, ‘ I could almost wish, that you were a little less deserving than you are, since the esteem you enforce is of so dangerous a kind.’ — She uttered this, with so inexpressible a tenderness in her voice and eyes, that he could not restrain himself from kissing her hand in the most passionate manner, though in the presence of her brother and sister, crying, at the same time, ‘ I desire no more of the world’s esteem, than just so much as may defend my lovely Harriot from all blame, for receiving my addresses.’

They afterwards fell into some discourse, concerning what was really deserving admiration, and what was so only in appearance,

ance, in which many mistakes in judging were detected, and the extreme weakness of giving implicitly into the opinion of others, exposed by examples suitable to the occasion.

But these are inquisitions which 'tis possible would not be very agreeable to the present age, and it would be madness to risque the displeasure of the multitude for the sake of gratifying a few; — so the reader must excuse the repetition of what was said by this agreeable company on that subject.

C H A P. XVIII.

*Displays miss Betsy in her penitentials,
and the manner in which she behaved
after having met with so much mat-
ter for the humiliation of her vanity,
as also some farther particulars,
equally worthy the attention of the cur-
rious.*

WHILE miss Betsy had her brothers with her, and was treated by them with a tenderness beyond what she could have expected, just after the unlucky adventure she had fallen into, she felt not

th

that remorse and vexation, which it might be said her present situation demanded.

But when they were gone, and she was left intirely to those reflections, which their presence had good humour had only retarded, how did they come with double force upon her! — To think she had received the addresses, and entertained with a mistaken respect, the lowest, and most abject dregs of mankind; — that she had exposed herself to the insults of that ruffian; — that it had not been in her power to defend herself from his taking liberties with her, the most shocking to her delicacy, and that she was on the very point of becoming the victim of his base designs upon her, made her feel over again, in idea, all the horrors of her real danger.

By turns, indeed, she blessed heaven for her escape; — but then the means to which she was indebted for that escape, was a fresh stab to her pride. — ‘I am preserved, ’tis true,’ said she, ‘from ruin and everlasting infamy; — but then by whom am I preserved? — by the man, who once adored, — then slighted, — and must now despise me. — If nothing but a miracle could save me, O! why, good heaven, was not that miracle performed by any instrument but him?’

— What

— What triumph to him! — What lasting shame to me, has this unfortunate accident produced!

‘ Alas ! ’ — continued she, weeping, — ‘ I wanted not this proof of his honour, — his courage, — his generosity ; — nor was there any need of my being reduced in the manner he found me, to make him think me undeserving of his affection.’

Never was a heart torn with a greater variety of anguish, than that of this unfortunate young lady : — as she yet was ignorant of what steps her brothers intended to take in this affair, and feared they might be such as would render what had happened to her public to the world, she fell into reflections that almost turned her brain ; — she represented to herself all the sarcasms, — all the comments, that she imagined, and probably would have been made on her behaviour, — her danger, and her delivery ; — all these thoughts were insupportable to her, — she resolved to hide herself for ever from the town, and pass her future life in obscurity ; — so dreadful to her were the apprehensions of becoming the object of derision, that rather than endure it she would suffer any

In the present despondency of her humour, she would certainly have fled the town, and gone directly down to L——e, if she had not known, that sir Ralph and lady Trusty were expected here in a very short time ; and she was so young when she left that country, that she could not think of any family to whom it was proper for her to go, without some previous preparations.

All her pride, — her gaiety, — her vanity of attracting admiration ; — in fine, all that had composed her former character, seemed now to be lost and swallowed up in the sense of that bitter shame and contempt, in which she imagined herself involved, and she wished for nothing but to be unseen, unregarded, and utterly forgotten, by all that had ever known her, — being almost ready to cry out with Dido,

- Nor art, nor nature's hand can ease
 ‘ my grief,
- Nothing but death, the wretch's last
 ‘ relief ;
- Then, farewell youth, and all the joys
 ‘ that dwell
- With youth and life, — and life itself,
 ‘ farewell.’

The despair of that unhappy queen, so elegantly described by the poet, could not far transcend what poor miss Betsy sustained during this whole cruel night ; — nor did the day afford her any more tranquility ; — on the contrary, she hated the light, — the sight even of her own servants was irksome to her ; — she ordered, that whoever came to visit her, except her brothers, should be denied admittance, — complained of a violent pain in her head, — would not be prevailed upon to take the least refreshment, but kept herself upon the bed, indulging all the horrors of despair and grief.

In the afternoon mr. Francis Thoughtless came, — seemed a little surprised to find his brother was not there, and told miss Betsy, that having been called different ways, they had appointed to meet at her lodgings, in order to have some serious discourse with her, concerning her future settlement, to which she replied, that her late fright hung so heavy on her spirits, that she was in little condition at present to resolve on any thing.

She spoke this with so dejected an air, that mr. Francis, who truly loved her, in spite of all the resentment he had for the errors

errors of her conduct, could not forbear saying a great many tender things to her ; but nothing afforded her so much consolation, as the account he gave her, that no prosecution would be commenced against the sham sir Frederick Fineer : —

‘ The villain,’ said he, ‘ is run away from his lodging, but questionless might easily be found out, and brought to justice ; but the misfortune is, that in cases of this nature, the offended must suffer as well as the offender ; — to punish him, must expose you ; — you see, therefore, to what your inadvertency has reduced you, — injured to the most shocking degree, yet denied the satisfaction of revenge.’

Miss Betsy only answering with her tears, — ‘ I speak not this to upbraid you,’ resumed he, ‘ and would be far from adding to the affliction you are in ; — on the contrary, I would have you be cheerful, and rejoice more in the escape you have had, than bewail the danger you have past through ; — but then, my dear sister, I would wish you also to put yourself into a condition, which may defend you from attempts of this vile nature.’

He was going on with something farther, when the elder mr. Thoughtless came in: — ‘ I have been detained,’ said that gentleman, ‘ longer than I expected; — my friend is going to have his picture drawn, and knowing I have been in Italy, would needs have my judgment upon the painter’s skill.’

‘ I suppose then,’ said mr. Francis, — ‘ your eyes have been feasted with the resemblance of a great number of beauties, either real or fictitious.’ — ‘ No faith,’ replied the other, ‘ I believe none of the latter; — the man seems to be too much an artist in his profession, to stand in any need of having recourse to that stale stratagem of inviting customers, by exhibiting shadows, which have no substances but in his own brain, and I must do him the justice to say, that I never saw life imitated to more perfection.’

‘ Then you saw some faces there you were acquainted with,’ said the younger mr. Thoughtless. — ‘ Two or three,’ answered the elder; — ‘ but one, which more particularly struck me, as I had seen the original but twice; — but once indeed to take any notice of: — it was of

‘ your friend, — the gentleman we waited on this morning.’

‘ What ! — Trueworth ! ’ — demanded Mr. Francis. — ‘ The same,’ resumed the other : — ‘ never was there a more perfect likeness ; — he is drawn in miniature ; I believe, by the size of the piece, intended to be worn at a lady’s watch ; — but I looked on it through my magnifier, and thought I saw his very self before me.’

He said much more in praise of the excellence of this artist, as indeed he was very full of it, having a desire his favourite mistress’s picture should be drawn, and was transported to have found a person, who, he thought, could do it so much justice.

Though Miss Betsy sat all this time in a pensive posture, and seemed not to take any notice of this discourse, yet no part of it was lost upon her. — ‘ You extol this painter so much, brother,’ said she, ‘ that if I thought my picture worth drawing, I would sit to him myself. — Pray,’ continued she, ‘ where does he live, and what is his name ? ’ — Mr. Thoughtless having satisfied her curiosity in these points, no more was said on the occasion,

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occasion, and the brothers immediately entered into a conversation, upon the business which had brought them thither.

The elder of them remonstrated to her, in the strongest terms he was able, the perpetual dangers to which, through the baseness of the world, and her own inadvertency, she was liable every day to be exposed: — ‘ This last ugly accident, said he, ‘ I hope may be hushed up, — ‘ mr. Trueworth, I dare believe, is too ‘ generous to make any mention of it, and ‘ those concerned in it will be secret for ‘ their own sakes ; — but you may not ‘ always meet the same prosperous chance. ‘ — It behoves us therefore, who must ‘ share in your disgrace, as well as have ‘ a concern for your happiness, to insist ‘ on your putting yourself into a different ‘ mode of life : — mr. Munden makes ‘ very fair proposals ; — he has given me ‘ leave to examine the rent-roll of his ‘ estate, which accordingly I have ordered ‘ a lawyer to do ; — he will settle an hun- ‘ dred and fifty pounds per annum on ‘ you for pin-money, and jointure you in ‘ four hundred, and I think your fortune ‘ does not entitle you to a better offer.’

‘ Brother, I have had better,’ replied miss Betty, with a sigh. — ‘ But you re-
jected

' ejected it,' cried Mr. Francis, with some warmth; — ' and you are not to expect a second Trueworth will fall to your share.' — ' Let us talk no more of what is past,' resumed the elder Mr. Thoughtless; — ' but endeavour to persuade our sister to accept of that, which at present is most for her advantage.'

Both these gentlemen, in their different turns, made use of every argument that could be brought on the occasion, to prevail on Miss Betsy to give them some assurance, that as now there was no better prospect for her, she would trifle no longer with the pretensions of Mr. Munden, but resolve to marry him, in case the condition of his affairs was proyed, upon enquiry, to be such as he had represented it to them.

She made, for a great while, very little reply to all this; — her head was now indeed very full of something else; — she sat in a kind of reverie, and had a perfect absence of mind, during this latter part of their discourse; — she heard, but heard without attention, and without considering the weight of any thing they urged; yet, at last, merely to get rid of their importunities and presence, that she might be alone to indulge her own meditations,

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tations, she said as they said, and pro-
mised to do whatever they required of
her.

Mr. Thoughtless having now, as he imagined, brought her to the bent he wished, took his leave; but Mr. Francis stayed some time longer, nor had, perhaps, gone so soon, if Miss Betsy had not discovered a certain restlessness, which made him think she would be glad to be alone.

This was the first time she had ever desired his absence, but now, indeed, most heartily did so; — she had got a caprice in her brain, which raised ideas there, she was in pain till she had modelled, and brought to the perfection she wanted. — What her brother had cursorily mentioned, concerning the picture of Mr. Trueworth, had made a much deeper impression on her mind, than all the serious discourse he had afterwards entertained her with; — she longed to have in her possession so exact a resemblance of a man, who once had loved her, and for whom she had always the most high esteem, though her pride would never suffer her to shew it to any one, who professed himself her lover. — ‘This picture,’ said she, ‘by looking on it, will remind me of the obligation

‘ obligation I have to him, — I might forget it else, — and I would not be ungrateful ; — though it is not in my nature to love, I may, nay I ought, after what he has done for me, to have a friendship for him.’

She then began to consider, whether there was a possibility of becoming the mistress of what she so much desired ; — she had never given her mind to plotting, — she had never been at the pains of any contrivances, but how to ornament her dress, or place the patches of her face with the most graceful art, and was extremely at a loss what stratagem to form for the getting this picture into her hands ; — at first, she thought of going to the painter, and bribe him to take a copy of it for her use ; — ‘ but then,’ said she, ‘ a copy taken from a copy goes still farther from the original ; — besides, he may betray me, or he may not have time to do it, and I would leave nothing to chance. — No, I must have the very picture that my brother saw, that I may be sure is like, for I know he is a judge.’

‘ Suppose,’ cried she again, ‘ I go under the pretence of sitting for my picture, and look over all his pieces, — I fancy

‘ fancy I may find an opportunity of slipping Trueworth’s into my pocket, — I could send the value of it the next day, so the man would be no sufferer by it.’

This project seemed feasible to her for a time, but she afterwards rejected it, on account, she could not be sure of committing the theft so artfully, as not to be detected in the fact ; — several other little stratagems succeeded this in her inventive brain, all which, on second thoughts, she found either impossible to be executed, or could promise no certainty in their effects.

Sleep was no less a stranger to her eyes this night, than it had been the preceding one ; — yet of how different a nature were the agitations which kept her waking : — in the first, the shock of the insult she had sustained, and the shame of her receiving her protection from him, by whom, of all men living, she was least willing to be obliged, took up all her thoughts ; — in the second, she was equally engrossed by the impatience of having something to preserve him eternally in her mind.

After long revolving within herself, she at last hit upon the means of accomplishing her desires ; — the risque she ran, indeed, was somewhat bold, but as it succeeded without suspicion, she had only to guard against accidents, that might occasion a future discovery of what she had done.

Early the next morning she sent to Blunt's, — hired a handsome chaise and pair, with a coachman, and two servants, in a livery very different from that she gave her own man ; — then dressed herself in a riding habit, and hunting-cap, which had been made for her, on her going down to Oxford, and she had never been seen in by Mr. Trueworth ; — so that she thought, she might be pretty confident, that when he should come to examine who had taken away his picture, the description could never enable him to guess at the right person.

With this equipage she went to the house where the painter lived ; — on enquiring for him by his name, he came immediately to know her commands. — ‘ You have the picture here of Mr. Trueworth,’ said she, ‘ pray is it ready ? ’ — ‘ Yes, madam,’ answered he, ‘ I am just going

‘ going to carry it home.’ — ‘ I am gla
‘ then, sir,’ resumed miss Betsy, ‘ that
‘ am come time enough to save you th
‘ trouble : — mr. Trueworth went t
‘ Hampstead last night, and being to fol
‘ low him this morning, he desired
‘ would bring it with me, and pay yo
‘ the money.’ — O, madam, as to th
‘ money,’ said he, ‘ I shall see mr. True
‘ worth again ;’ — and then called to hi
man to bring down his picture. — ‘ In
‘ deed I shall not take it without payin
‘ you,’ said she ; ‘ but in the hurry
‘ forgot to ask him the sum, — pray ho
‘ much is it ?’ — ‘ My constant price
‘ madam,’ replied he, ‘ is ten guineas
‘ and the gentleman never offered to bea
‘ me down.’

By this time the man had brought th
picture down in a little box, which th
painter opening, as he presented to hei
cried, ‘ Is it not a prodigious likeness
‘ madam ?’ — ‘ Yes really, sir,’ said she
‘ in my opinion there is no fault to b
‘ found.’ — She then put the picture into
her pocket, — counted ten guineas to hin
out of her purse, and told him, with a
smile, that she believed he would very
shortly have more business from the sam
quarter, — then bid the coachman driv
on.

The coachman having previous orders what to do, was no sooner out of sight of the painter's house, than he turned down the first street, and carried miss Betsy directly home ; — she discharged her retinue, undressed herself with all the speed she could, and whoever had now seen her, would never have suspected she had been abroad.

This young lady was not of a temper to grieve long for any thing ; — how deep soever she was affected, the impression wore off on the first new turn that offered itself. — All her remorse, — all her vexation, for the base design laid against her at mrs. Modely's, were dissipated the moment she took it into her head to get possession of this picture, and the success of her enterprize elated her beyond expression.

It cannot be supposed, that it was altogether owing to the regard she had for mr. Trueworth, though in effect much more than she herself was yet sensible of, that she took all this pains ; it looks as if there was also some little mixture of female malice in the case. — Her brother had said, that the picture seemed to be intended to be worn at a lady's watch ; — she

— she doubted not but it was so, and the thoughts of disappointing her rival's expectations, contributed greatly to the satisfaction she felt at what she had done.

C H A P. XIX.

Presents the reader with some occurrences, which, from the foregoing preparations, might be expected, and also with others that may seem more surprising.

MISS Betsy was not deceived in her conjecture, in relation to the picture's being designed as an offering to some lady: — mr. Trueworth had not indeed fate for it to please himself, but to oblige miss Harriot, who had given some hints, that such a present would not be unwelcome to her.

It is a common thing with painters to keep the pieces in their own hands as long as they can, after they are finished; especially if they are of persons endued by nature with any perfections, which may do honour to their art: — this gentleman was like others of his profession, — he found it to his credit to shew mr. Trueworth's

worth's picture to as many as came to look over his paintings, and had detained it for several days beyond the time in which he had promised to send it, on pretence, that there were still some little touches wanting in the drapery.

Mr. Trueworth growing a little impatient at the delay, as miss Harriot had asked two or three times, in a gay manner, when she should see his resemblance, went himself, in order to fetch it away : — the painter was surprised at sight of him, and much more so when he demanded the picture ; — he told him, however, the whole truth without hesitation, that he delivered it to a lady not above an hour before he came, who paid him the money for it, and said that she had called for it on his request.

Nothing had ever happened that seemed more strange to him ; — he made a particular enquiry concerning the face, — age, — complexion, — shape, — stature, and even dress of the lady, who had put this trick upon him ; and it was well for miss Betsy, that she had taken all the precautions she did, or she had infallibly been discovered. — A thing, which, perhaps, would have given her more lasting confusion,

confusion, than even her late unlucky adventure with the mock baronet.

She was, however, among all the ladies of his acquaintance, almost the only one who never came into his head on this occasion ; — sometimes he thought of one, — sometimes he thought of another ; but on recollecting all the particulars of their behaviour towards him, could find no reason to ascribe what had been done to any of them : — miss Flora was the only person he could imagine capable of such a thing ; — he found it highly probable, that her love and invention had furnished her with the means of committing this innocent fraud ; and though he was heartily vexed, that he must be at the trouble of fitting for another picture, yet he could not be angry with the woman who had occasioned it : — on the contrary, he thought there was something so tender, and so delicate withal, in this proof of her passion, that it very much enhanced the pity and good-will he before had for her.

But while his generous heart was entertaining these too favourable and kind sentiments of her, she was employing her whole wicked wit, to make him appear
the

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 241
the basest of mankind, and also to render him the most unhappy.

She had found out every thing she wanted to know, concerning Mr. Trueworth's courtship to Miss Harriot, and flattered herself, that a lady bred in the country, and unacquainted with the artifices frequently practised in town, to blacken the fairest characters, would easily be frightened into a belief of any thing she attempted to inspire her with.

In the vile hope, therefore, of accomplishing so detestable a project, she contrived a letter in the following terms :

To miss HARRIOT LOVEIT.

‘ MADAM,
‘ WHERE innocence is about to suffer, merely through its incapacity of suspecting that ill in another it cannot be guilty of itself, common honesty forbids a stander-by to be silent : — you are on the brink of a precipice, which if you fall into, it is not in the power of human art to save you. — Death only can remove you from misery, — remorse, — distraction, and woes without a name. — Truworth, that fly deceiver of your sex, and most abandoned of his

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M

‘ own,

‘ own, can only bring you a polluted
‘ heart and prostituted vows ; — he made
‘ the most honourable professions of love
‘ to a young lady of family and character,
‘ — gained her affections, — I hope no
‘ more ; — but whatever was between
‘ them, he basely quitted her, to mourn
‘ her ill-placed love and ruined fame : —
‘ yet this, madam, is but his least of
‘ crimes ; — he has since practised his be-
‘ traying arts on another, superior to the
‘ former in every female virtue and ac-
‘ complishment, — second to none in
‘ beauty, and of a reputation spotless as
‘ the sun, till an unhappy passion for that
‘ worst of men obscured its brightness, at
‘ least in the eyes of the censorious ; — he
‘ is, however, bound to her by the most
‘ solemn engagements that words can form,
‘ under his own hand-writing ; which, if
‘ she does not in due time produce against
‘ him, it will be owing only to her too
‘ great modesty. — These two, madam,
‘ are the most conspicuous victims of his
‘ perfidy, — pray heaven you may not
‘ close the sad triumvirate, and that I
‘ may never see such beauty, and such
‘ goodness, stand among the foremost in
‘ the rank of those many wretches he has
‘ made.

‘ In fine, madam, he has deceived your
friends, and betrayed you into a mista-
ken opinion of his honour and sincerity:
— if he marries you, you cannot but be
miserable, he being the right of another;
— if he does not marry you, your re-
putation suffers.—Happy is it for you if
the loss of reputation is all you will have
to regret; — he already boasts of having
received favours from you, which, who-
ever looks in your face will find it very
difficult to think you capable of grant-
ing; — but yet, who knows what
strange effects too great a share of ten-
derness in the composition may not
have produced?

‘ Fly then, madam, from this destruc-
tive town, and the worst monster in it,
Trueworth: — Retire in time to those
peaceful shades from whence you came,
— and save what yet remains of you-
worthy your attention to preserve.

‘ Whatever reports to your prejudice,
the vanity of your injurious deceiver
may have made him give out, among
his loose companions, I still hope your
virtue has hitherto protected you, and
that this warning will not come too late
to keep you from ever verifying them.’

‘ Be assured, madam, that in giving
this account, I am instigated by no
other motive than merely my love of
virtue, and detestation of all who would
endeavour to corrupt it, and that I am,

‘ With a perfect sincerity,

‘ MADAM,

‘ Your well-wisher,

‘ And humble servant,

‘ UNKNOWN.

Miss Flora, on considering what she had wrote, began to think she had expressed herself in somewhat too warm a manner; — but she let it pass on this account: — ‘ By the virulence,’ said she, ‘ with which I have spoke of Trueworth, his adored miss Harriot will certainly imagine it comes from one of those unhappy creatures I have represented in it; — and, if so, it will gain the more credit with her; — if she supposes that rage and despair has dictated some groundless accusations against her lover, she nevertheless will believe others to be fact, and that at least he has been false to one.’

She

She therefore went to the person, who was always her secretary in affairs of this nature, and having got it copied, was going to the post-house, in order to send it away ; for she never trusted any person but herself with these dispatches.

She was within three or four yards of the post-house, when she saw Mr. Trueworth at some distance, on the other side of the street ; — her heart fluttered at this unexpected sight of him ; — she had no power to refrain speaking to him ; — she stayed not to put her letter in, but flew directly cross the way, and met him just as he was turning the corner of another street.

‘ Oh, Mr. Trueworth,’ cried she, as they drew near each other, ‘ I have prayed that I might live, once more to see you, and heaven has granted my petition.’

‘ I hope, madam,’ said he, ‘ that heaven will always be equally propitious to your desires in things of greater moment.’ — ‘ There can scarce be any of greater moment,’ answered she ; ‘ for at present I have a request to make you of the utmost importance to me, though

' no more than I am certain you would
' readily grant to any one you had the
' least acquaintance with ; — but,' con-
tinued she, ' this is no proper place for
' us to discourse in, — upon the terms we
' now are, it can be no breach of faith
' to the mistress of your vows, to step
' with me for three minutes where we
' may not be exposed to the view of every
' passenger.'

Mr. Truworth had not been very well pleased with the encounter, and would gladly have dispensed with complying with her invitation, but thought after what she had said, he could not refuse, without being guilty of a rudeness unbecoming of himself, as well as cruel to her ; yet did he comply in such a manner as might make her see, his inclination had little part in his consent ; — he told her, he was in very great haste, but would snatch as much time as she mentioned from the business he was upon. — Nothing more was said, and they went together into the nearest tavern, where being seated, and wine brought in, — ' Now, madam,' said he, with a cold civility, ' please to favour me with your commands.'

' Alas !'

‘ Alas !’ replied she, ‘ it belongs not
to me to command, and my request
you have already granted.’ — ‘ What
without knowing it,’ cried he? — ‘ Yes,’
resumed she, ‘ I thought an intimacy such
as ours has been, ought not to have
been broke off without a kind farewell.
— I blame you not for marrying; —
yet sure I deserve not to be quite for-
saken, — utterly thrown off! — you
might at least have flattered me with
the hope, that, in spite of your matri-
monial engagement, you would still re-
tain some sparks of affection for your
poor Flora.’ — ‘ Be assured,’ said he,
‘ I shall always think on you with tender-
ness.’ — ‘ And can you then resolve ne-
ver to see me more,’ rejoined she pa-
ssionately? — ‘ I hoped,’ replied he, ‘ that
you had acquiesced in the reasons I gave
for that resolution.’ — ‘ I hoped so too,’
said she, ‘ and made use of my utmost
efforts for that purpose; — but ’tis in
vain, — I found I could not live with-
out you, and only wished an opportu-
nity to take one last embrace before I
leave the world and you for ever.’ —
In speaking these words she threw herself
upon his neck, and burst into a flood of
tears.

How impossible was it for a heart, such as Mr. Trueworth's, to be unmoved at a spectacle like this ; — her love, — her grief, and her despair shot through his very soul ; — scarce could he refrain mingling his tears with hers : — *My dear Fora, cried he, compose yourself, — by heaven I cannot bear to see you thus.* — He kissed her cheek while he was speaking, — seated her in a chair, and held her hand in his, with the extremest tenderness.

This wicked creature was not so overcome with the emotions of her love and grief, as not to see the pity she had raised in him, and flattering herself, that there was in it some mixture of a passion, she more wished to inspire, fell a second time upon his bosom, crying, — ‘ Oh, Trueworth ! — Trueworth ! — here let me die, for death has nothing in it so terrible as the being separated from you.’

Mr. Trueworth was a man of strict honour, — great resolution, and passionately devoted to the most deserving of her sex ; — yet he was still a man, — was of an amorous complexion, and thus tempted, who can answer, but in this unguarded moment he might have been guilty of

a wrong to his dear Harriot, for which he would afterwards have hated himself, if an accident of more service to him, than his own virtue, in so critical a juncture, had not prevented him?

He returned the embrace she gave, and joined his lips to her's, with a warmth which she had not for a long time experienced from him, a sudden rush of transport came at once upon her, with such force, that it overwhelmed her spirits, and she fell into a kind of fainting between his arms; — he was frighted at the change he observed in her, and hastily cutting the lacings of her stays to give her air, the letter above-mentioned dropped from her breast upon the ground; — he took it up, and was going to throw it upon the table, but in that action seeing the name of miss Harriot on the superscription, was struck with an astonishment not easy to be conceived; — he no longer thought of the condition miss Flora was in, but tearing open the letter began to examine the contents.

Miss Flora in that instant recovering her senses, and the remembrance of what had been concealed in her bosom, flew to him, endeavouring to snatch the paper from his hands, but he had already seen too much.

not to be determined to see the rest. — ‘Stand off!’ cried he, in a voice half choaked with fury, — ‘I am not yet fully acquainted with the whole of the favours you have bestowed upon me in this paper.’ — Confounded as she was, cunning did not quite forsake her, — ‘I am ignorant of what it contains,’ said she; — ‘I found it in the street. — It is not mine, — I wrote it not.’

With such like vain pretences would she have pleaded innocence, yet all the time endeavoured, with her whole strength, to force the proof of her guilt from him, insomuch, that though he was very tall, he was obliged with one hand to keep her off, and with the other hold the paper at arms length, while he was reading it, yet could not forbear frequently interrupting himself, to cast a look full of contempt and rage, on the malicious authoress, — ‘Vile hypocrite!’ cried he; — and then again, as he got farther into the base invective, — ‘Thou fiend in female form!’

She now finding all was over, and seized with a sudden fit of frenzy, or something like it, ran to his sword, which he had pulled off, and laid in the window, and was about to plunge it in her breast; — he easily wrested it from her, and putting

ting it by his side, ‘ O thou serpent ! — ‘ thou viper ! ’ cried he, — ‘ if thou wert a man, thou shouldst not need to be thy own executioner.’ — The tide of her passion then turning another way, she threw herself at his feet, — clung round his legs, and in a voice rather screaming than speaking uttered these words : ‘ O ! ‘ pardon me ! — pity me ! — whatever I have done my love of you occasioned it.’ — ‘ Curse on such poisonous love,’ rejoined he : — ‘ hell, and its worst effects, are in the name, when mentioned by a mouth like thine.’ — Then finding it a little difficult to disentangle himself from the hold she had taken of him, — ‘ Thou shame and scandal to that sex, to which alone thou oweſt thy safety,’ cried he, furiously, ‘ quit me this instant, lest I forget thou art a woman, — lest I spurn thee from me, and use thee as the worst of reptiles.’

On hearing these dreadful words, all her strength forsook her, — the sinews of her hands relaxed, and lost their grasp, — she fell a second time into a fainting fit, but of a nature as different from what the former had been, as were the emotions that occasioned it : — mr. Trueworth was now too much and too justly irritated to be capable of relenting ; — he left her in

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this condition, and only bid the people at
the bar, as he went out of the house,
send somebody up to her assistance.

The humour he was at present in, ren-
dering him altogether unfit for company,
he went directly to his lodgings, where
examining the letter with more attention
than he could do before, he presently ima-
gined, he was not altogether unacquainted
with the hand writing ; — he very well
knew it was not that of miss Flora, yet
positive that he had somewhere seen it
before ; that which he had received, con-
cerning miss Betsy, and the child at Den-
ham, came fresh into his head ; — he
found them, indeed, the same on com-
paring, and, as the reader may suppose,
this discovery added not a little to the re-
sentment he was before enflamed with,
against the base inventress of these double
falshoods.



CHAP

CHAP. XX.

Contains divers things.

MISS Betsy was all this time enjoying the little fraud she had been guilty of : — the idea how Mr Trueworth would be surprized at finding his picture had been taken away, and the various conjectures that would naturally rise in his mind, upon so odd an accident, gave her more real pleasure than others feel on the accomplishment of the most material event.

She was, indeed, of a humour the most perfectly happy for herself that could be ; — cheerful, — gay, — not apt to create imaginary ills, as too many do, and become wretched for misfortunes which have no existence, but in their own fretful dispositions. — On any real cause, either for grief or anger, that happened to her, no body, it is certain, felt them with a more poignant sensibility ; but then she was affected with them but a short time. — The turbulent passions could obtain no residence in her mind, and on the first approaches of their opposite emotions entirely.

tirely vanished, as if they had never been. — The arrows of affliction, of what kind soever they were, but slightly glanced upon her heart, not pierced it, much less were able to make any lasting impression there.

She now visited as usual, — saw as much company as ever, and hearing no mention made, wherever she went, of her adventure with the mock baronet, concluded, the whole thing was, and would remain, an eternal secret, and therefore easily forgot it; or, if it came into her head, remembered it only on account of her deliverer.

She was now on exceeding good terms with her brothers, who were full of spirits themselves: — the elder Mr. Thoughtless, who loved play but too well, had lately had some lucky casts, and Mr. Francis had accomplished his affairs, — his commission was signed, and every thing contributed to render the whole family perfectly easy in themselves, and obliging to each other.

In the midst of this contentment of mind Mr. Edward Goodman came to town from Deal: — the two Mr. Thoughtless, on account of the many obligations they had to his uncle, and the good character

character they had heard of himself, received him with abundance of respect and affection.

This young Indian had a great deal of the honest simplicity of his uncle, both in his countenance and behaviour, and wanted not politeness and good manners sufficient to render his conversation very agreeable.

He was sent from Bengal at about four years of age, and received the first rudiments of his education at one of the best schools in England, where he continued till he had attained to his nineteenth, and then returned to his native country, and was now about twenty-four.

Mr. Thoughtless had now got so much the better of his mistress, as to prevail on her, to content herself with keeping in her own apartment, whenever he had any company, by whom it was improper for her to be seen.

He made a handsome entertainment for Mr. Goodman, soon after his arrival, to which the lawyer, who had the care of his affairs, with his wife, a well bred, discreet woman, was also invited; — miss Betsy,

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Betsy, at the request of her brother, pre-
fided at the head of the table.

Dinner was ordered to be ready about three, and the invitation accordingly made; but the lawyer not coming, his wife, perceiving they waited for him, was a little perplexed; but she was soon eased of it, by his coming in less than a quarter of an hour, after the time he was expected.

This gentleman was the very person who made mrs. Blanchfield's will, and to apologize for his stay, he related to them the cause that had detained him, which was, that a demur being made to the payment of some part of the money bequeathed by that lady to mr. Truworth, he had been obliged to go with him, in order to rectify the mistake which had occasioned it.—In giving this account he imagined not, that any person present had the least concern in it, or even were acquainted with either of the parties he mentioned.

Miss Betsy said nothing, but had her own reflections on what he had been saying; — she, however, had the satisfaction of hearing her two brothers ask those questions she longed to put to him herself.—By the answers he made, she doubted.

ed not, but the deceased had been courted
by mr. Truworth, — had loved him, and
was to have been married to him, by her
having made him so considerable a le-
gacy.

The rest of their conversation that whole day, was chiefly on matters concerning the late mr. Goodman, — the baseness of lady Mellasin, and the measures that were taking to detect the fraud she had been guilty of ; — all which was very dry and insipid to miss Betsy at this time, as indeed it would have been, had it turned on any other subject. — She was not, therefore, very sorry when the company broke up, that she might be at home, and at full liberty to indulge meditations, which promised her more satisfaction than any thing she could hear abroad.

She had set it down in her mind, from what the lawyer had said, as a sure fact, that mr. Truworth, since his desisting his courtship to her, had loved another, and also, that her rival in his affection was now no more. — ‘ He need not,’ said she to herself, ‘ be at the trouble of fitting a second time for his picture, in compliment to her ; nor can what I have done be a subject of disquiet to either of them.’

She

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her answers were not at all of a piece
with that ready wit which she had always
testified on other occasions.

Mr. Thoughtless perceiving she was rather studious to evade giving any determinate answer, than willing to give such a one as he desired she should, began to expostulate with her on the capriciousness of her humour and behaviour ; — he conjured her to reflect on her late adventure with the impostor, sir Frederick Fineet ; and how ill it became her to countenance the addresses of a wretch like him, and at the same time trifle with a man of fortune and reputation.

She suffered him to go on in this manner for a considerable time, without giving him the least interruption, but by degrees recovering her spirits, — ‘ I shall take care, sir,’ said she, ‘ never to fall into the like adventure again, neither do I intend to trifle with mr. Munden ; but marriage is a thing of too serious a nature to hurry into, without first having made trial of the constancy of the man who would be a husband, and also of being well assured of one’s own heart.’

Mr.

Mr. Thoughtless then told her, with some warmth, that he found she was relapsing into a humour, and way of thinking, which could not in the end but bring ruin on herself, and disgrace to all her family; and added, that for his part he should intermeddle no more in her affairs.

— The tender soul of miss Betsy was deeply affected at these words; — she loved her brothers, and could not bear their displeasures; — the thought of having any disagreement with them was dreadful to her, yet the putting a constraint on her inclinations to oblige them was no less so: — in this dilemma, whether she complied, or whether she refused, she found herself equally unhappy.

One moment she was opening her mouth to yield a ready assent to all that was requested of her, on the score of mr. Munden; — the next to confess, that she neither liked, nor loved that gentleman, and knew not whether she should ever be able to resolve on a marriage with him; but her sincerity forbade the one, and her fears of offending gave a check to the other, and both together kept her entirely silent.

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‘ You ought, methinks, however,’ resumed Mr. Thoughtless, ‘ to have spared Mr. Munden the trouble of laying open his circumstances, and me that of examining into them.’ — ‘ I should undoubtedly have done so, sir,’ answered she, ‘ if I had been entirely averse to the proposals of Mr. Munden, therefore both you and he are too hasty in judging.— You know, brother, that Sir Ralph, and my dear Lady Trusty, will be in town in a very few days, and I am willing to have the approbation of as many of my friends as possible, in a thing of so much consequence to my future peace.’

Mr. Thoughtless was now somewhat better satisfied than he had been, and after recommending to her a constancy of mind and resolution, took his leave of her.

This conversation having a little dissipated those gay imaginations she was before possessed of, she began to consider seriously, what she meant by all this, and what it availed her to give both her lover and brothers so much matter of complaint against her; she reflected, that she had now gone so far with that gentleman, that neither honour towards him, nor regard to her own reputation, would well suffer her

her to go back ; — ‘ Since it is so then,’ said she to herself, ‘ to what end do I take all this trouble to invent excuses for delaying what must one day necessarily be ? ’

‘ Yet, wherefore must it be,’ continued she? ‘ I have made no promise, and if a better offer should happen, I see no reason that obliges me to reject it : — for example, — if mr. Truworth, or such a one as mr. Truworth, if his equal is to be found in nature, neither my brothers, nor the world, I fancy, would condemn me for quitting mr. Munden.’

‘ Why then,’ cried she, ‘ need I make all this haste to put myself out of the way of fortune? — I am young enough, — have lost no part of what has attracted me so many admirers ; and while my heart and hand are free, have, at least, a chance of being more happy, than mr. Munden can make me.’

In fine, being fully perswaded in her mind, that the lady, who had supplanted her in mr. Truworth’s affection, was dead, she imagined, there was a probability he might renew his addresses to herself : — she wished, at least, to make the experiment, and to that end resolved, to

to give no promise to Mr. Munden; — yet would she not allow herself to think she loved the other, but only that she would give him the preference, as he was a match of more advantage.

Nothing is more certain, nor, I believe, more obvious to the reader, than that this young lady, almost from the time of Mr. Trueworth's quitting her, had entertained a growing inclination for him, which the late service he had rendered her had very much increased; — but this her pride would not suffer her to own, even to herself, as the comic poet truly says,

- ‘ For whatsoe'er the sages charge on
‘ pride,
- ‘ The angels fall, and twenty faults be-
‘ side,
- ‘ On earth ’tis sure, ’mong us of mor-
‘ tal calling,
- ‘ Pride saves man oft, and woman too,
‘ from falling.



C H A P. XXI.

*Presents the reader with some prognostics
on events in futuro.*

THE reader will easily suppose, that in the present disposition of miss Betsy's heart, mr. Munden met with but an indifferent reception from her ; — she avoided his company as much as possible, and when obliged to receive a visit from him, could not bring herself to treat him with any thing more than a cold civility. — He complained of her cruelty, — told her, he had expected better things from her, after her brothers had approved his flame ; — he pressed her, in the most pathetic terms he was master of, to let him know when the happy day would arrive, which should put an end to the long series of his hopes and fears.

It is certain, that if this gentleman had loved with that warmth and sincerity which some men have done, he must have been very unhappy during his courtship to miss Betsy, — but he was altogether insensible of the delicacies of the passion he professed, — he felt not the pain.

pains he affected to languish under, — he could support the frowns, or even the flights of his mistress, without any other anxiety than what his pride inflicted.

It was, therefore, rather owing to this last propensity in his nature, than any emotions of a real tenderness for miss Betsey, which had made him persevere in his addresses to her. — All his acquaintance knew he had courted her a long time; — some of them had been witness of her treatment of him, and he was unwilling it should be said of him, that he had made an offer of his heart in vain.

He had, at first, indeed, a liking of her person; — he had considered her beauty, wit, and the many accomplishments she was possessed of, were such as would render his choice applauded by the world. — The hopes of gaining her in a short time, by the encouragement she had given his addresses, had made him pursue her with vigour; but the delays, — the scruples, the capriciousness of her humour, — the pretences she of late had made to avoid giving, him a definitive answer, had, at length, palled all the inclination he once had for her, and even desire was deadened in him, on so many disappointments.

It is, therefore, a very ill-judged thing in the ladies, to keep too long in play the man they ever design to marry ; and with all due deference to that great wit and poet, sir John Suckling, there are very few examples, which verify his maxim, that

‘ ‘Tis expectation makes the blessing
‘ dear.’

According to my opinion, which is founded on observation, another author, who wrote much about the same time with sir John, has given us a more true idea of what a tedious courtship may produce, especially on the side of the man : — in a matrimonial dialogue, he makes the husband excuse the coldness complained of by his wife, in these terms ;

‘ Unequal lengths, alas ! our passions
‘ run,
‘ My love was quite worn out, e'er
‘ your's begun.’

This being the case with mr. Munden, it rendered miss Betsy little less indifferent to him, in reality, than he had ever been to her : — to which another motive, perhaps, might also be added, viz. that of his indulging himself with amusements with other fair ones, of a more kind complexion ; for continuity, as will hereafter

But enough of Mr. Munden for the present. — It is now highly proper to give the reader some account what Mr. True-worth was doing, while Miss Betsy was entertaining sentiments for him, which he had long since ceased the ambition of inspiring her with.

Difficult was it for him to get over the mingled astonishment and vexation, which the detection of the wickedness of Miss Flora had involved him in. — The remembrance of those guilty moments, in which he had indulged a tender intercourse with a woman of her abandoned principles, filled him with the most bitter remorse, and rendered him almost hateful to himself.

To recollect, that he had been the instrument of her base designs on Miss Betsy, and how cruelly he had wronged that lady, by a too rash belief, was, of itself, sufficient to inflame his rage; but when he reflected on this last act of baseness, which, if not providentially discovered, might have made his dear Harriot entertain suspicions of him, fatal to her peace, if not totally destructive of their mutual happiness, the shock of such a misfortune.
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though happily frustrated, was more than he could bear with any tolerable degree of patience.

Rage, disdain, and revenge, for the vile contriver of so black an attempt, were the first emotions that took possession of his mind ; but the violence of those passions evaporating by degrees, he began to think more coolly, and to reason with himself, on the source, from which that depravity of morals and manners, women are sometimes guilty of, proceeded.

‘ Chastity,’ said he, ‘ is but one branch of virtue, but a material one, and serves as a guard to all the others, and, if that is once overcome, endangers the giving entrance to a thousand vices. — A woman, entirely free from those inordinate desires, which are indeed but the disgrace of love, can scarce be capable of envy, malice, or revenge to any excess.’

‘ That sex,’ cried he again, ‘ are endowed by nature with many perfections, which ours cannot boast of, — it is their own faults when they sink beneath us in value ; — but the best things, when once corrupted, become the worst. — How dear, therefore, ought a woman to prize her innocence !’ — as Shakespear says,

- ‘ — They all are white, — a sheet
- ‘ Of spotless paper, when they first are
‘ born ;
- ‘ But they are to be scrawl’d upon, and
‘ blotted
- ‘ By every goose-quill. —

He was in the midst of these contemplations, when a letter from miss Flora was brought to him ; — she still flattered herself with being able to work on his good-nature by submissions, and a seeming contrition for what she had done, and had accordingly wrote in the most moving terms she was mistress of ; — but he knowing, by the hand-writing on the superscription, from whom it came, would not even open it, and his indignation re-kindling afresh, he took a piece of paper, in which he wrote only this line,

‘ I read no letters from incendiaries.’

This served as a cover to the letter, which he sent back directly by the messenger that brought it.

If the mind of mr. Trueworth had been less taken up than it was at present, this ugly accident would, doubtless, have dwelt much longer upon it ; — but affairs of a more important, and more pleasing nature, demanded his whole attention.

The

The day prefixed for the celebration of his marriage with miss Harriot, and also of that of sir Bazil and miss Mabel, had been delayed on account of mrs. Blanchfield's death. — None of these generous persons could think of indulging the joys they so much languished for, 'till all due rites were paid to the memory of that amiable lady.

Mr. Trueworth and miss Harriot went into deep mourning ; — sir Bazil and mrs. Wellair also put on black ; — miss Mabel did the same in compliment to them ; for she had not the least acquaintance with the deceased.

Nor was this all : — mr. Trueworth, to testify his gratitude and respect, ordered a very curious monument of white marble to be erected over her remains, the model of which he drew himself, after one he had seen in Italy, and was much admired by all judges of architecture and sculpture.

If, by a secret and unfathomable intuition, the souls of the departed are permitted any knowledge of what is done below, that of mrs. Blanchfield's must feel an extreme satisfaction, in such proofs of the esteem of him she had so tenderly and

so fatally loved, as well as those of her fair friend and rival.

That generous young lady would fain have prolonged their mourning for a whole month, and consequently have put off her marriage till that time ; but this, if mr. Trueworth would have been prevailed upon to have submitted to, sir Bazil and mrs. Wellair would not agree to ; — he thought he had already sacrificed enough of the time of his promis'd happiness, and mrs. Wellair was impatient to go home, though equally loth to leave her sister, 'till she had disposed of herself,

They were arguing on this topick one evening : — mr. Trueworth opposed miss Harriot, as much as he durst do without danger of offending her ; but sir Bazil plainly told her, that if she continued obstinate, miss Mabel and he would finish their affair without her. — Mrs. Wellair urged the necessity there was for her return, and mr. Trueworth, encouraged by what these two had said, added, that he was certain mrs. Blanchfield did not mean, by what she had done, to obstruct his happiness a moment : — to which miss Harriot, with a most obliging smile, replied, ‘ Well,’ cried she, ‘ obedience will very shortly be my duty, and I will give

' give you a sample of it before-hand : — here is my hand,' continued she, giving it to him, ' make it your own as soon as you please.'

It is not to be doubted but mr. Trueworth kissed the hand she gave him, with the utmost warmth and tenderness ; but before he could make any reply to so kind a declaration, sir Bazil cried out, — ' Well said, Harriot, — love has already wrought wonders in your heart ; — you will grant to a lover what you refuse to us.' — ' Not to a lover, sir,' answered she, ' but to a person who is about to be my husband. — I think it is as ill-judged a reserve in a woman to disown her affection for the man she has consented to marry, as it would be imprudence to confess it before she has consented.'

After some farther conversation on this head, in the course of which mr. Trueworth had the opportunity of being more confirmed than ever, that the disposition of his mistress was, in every respect, such as he wished to find it ; — all that was yet wanting for the completion of the nuptials was settled.

The second day after this was fixed for the celebration of the ceremony, after which it was determined, that the two

bridegrooms with their brides, — the father of miss Mabel, mrs. Wellair, and two other friends, should all set out together for sir Bazil's seat in Staffordshire, and that mrs. Wellair should write to her husband to meet them there, that the whole family might be together on so joyful an occasion.

C H A P. XXII.

*Will prove, by a remarkable instance of
a high-raised hope suddenly disap-
pointed, the extreme weakness of build-
ing our expectations upon mere con-
jecture.*

THOUGH it is not to be imagined, that the preparations for marriages, such as those of sir Bazil Loveit, and mr. Trueworth, could be an entire secret to the town, especially as neither of the parties had any motive to induce them to desire it should be so ; yet miss Betsy never heard the least syllable of any such thing being in agitation. — Those of her acquaintance, whom she at present chiefly conversed with, were either ignorant of it themselves, or had never happened to mention it in her presence ; so that knowing

ing nothing of Mr. Trúeworth's affairs of late, more than what the lawyer had casually related at her brother's, it is not to be wondered at, that she imagined him wholly disengaged, since the death of that lady, who had so kindly remembered him in her will.

Neither ought it (her vanity considered) to appear strange, that she was apt to flatter herself with a belief of the return of his affection to herself, when the memory of the late object of it should be utterly erased.

When there is the least probability, that what we ardently wish may come to pass, the minutest circumstance, in favour of our hopes, serves to assure us, that it certainly will do so.

Miss Betsy was going to make a visit at Whitehall ; but in crossing the park happened to meet the two miss Airishes, who asked her to take a turn with them : — to which she replied, that she would gladly accompany them, but had sent word to a lady that she was coming to pass the whole evening with her. — ‘ Nay,’ said the elder miss Airish, ‘ we have an engagement too at our own apartment, and can stay only to walk once up the Mall, and down again.’ Miss Betsy

N 6 replied,

replied, that would be no great loss of time, and so went with them. — They had not proceeded many yards in their promenade, before miss Betsy saw mr. Trueworth, with sir Bazil, coming directly towards them. — The gentlemen bowed to her as they approached more near. — A sudden thought that moment starting into miss Betsy's head, she dropped her fan, as if by accident, as they were passing each other, just at mr. Trueworth's feet ; — he stooped hastily to take it up, and presented it to her : — ‘ I am sorry, sir,’ said she, ‘ to give you this trouble.’ — ‘ Whatever services, madam, are in my power to render you,’ replied he, ‘ will be always a pleasure to myself.’ — No more was said ; — the gentlemen and the ladies pursued their different routs. — This little adventure, however, had a prodigious effect on miss Betsy ; — she thought she saw something so gay and sparkling in the eyes of mr. Trueworth, as denoted his mourning habit belied his heart, and that he was not much affected with the death of her, for whom decency and gratitude had obliged him to put it on.

After the gentlemen were out of hearing, the two miss Airishes began to give their judgments upon them : — the one cried, they were both very pretty fellows ; but

but the other accused them of want of politeness, — ‘ As they saw we had no man with us,’ said she, ‘ they might, methinks, have offered their service to gallant us, especially as one of them seems to be acquainted with miss Betsy.’ — But that young lady little regarded what was said on this occasion, being too much taken up with her own cogitations ; — she repeated internally the words of mr. Trueworth, and as she was persuaded he was now at liberty to offer her all manner of services, she interpreted, that by ‘ whatever services were in his power,’ he meant to renew his services to her as a lover. — This imagination elated her to a very high degree, but hindered her from holding any conversation with the two ladies she was with, as it was improper for her to say any thing on the subject, which so much engrossed her thoughts. They all walked together up to Buckingeham house, then turned back, and the two miss Airishes took leave of her at St. James’s ; — they went into the palace, and she was proceeding towards Spring-garden, when she at a distance perceived sir Bazil Loveit, mr. Truworth, miss Mabel, and two ladies, whose faces she was entirely unacquainted with.

The reader will not be at a loss to guess,

guess, that these two were no other than mrs. Wellair and miss Harriot: — they had been that afternoon to take leave of some friends, on their going out of town, and had appointed to meet the gentlemen in the Mall; — in their way thither, they had called upon miss Mabel, and brought her with them. — This little troop being all in the same sable livery, seemed so much of a family, as threw miss Betsy into some sort of surprize; — she knew not that miss Mabel had the least acquaintance with sir Bazil, nor even any more with mr. Trueworth, than having seen him a few times in her company. — As they drew nearer, she made a motion to miss Mabel, as if she was desirous of speaking to her, — upon which that lady advanced towards her, with these words: ‘ I am sorry, madam,’ said she, ‘ as you are alone, that it is improper for me to ask you to join us.’ — ‘ I am very glad, madam, you do not,’ replied miss Betsy, very much picqued, ‘ because I should be obliged to refuse you.’ — She no sooner uttered these words than she passed hastily on, and miss Mabel returned to her company, who waited for her at some paces distance.

It must be acknowledged, that miss Betsy had cause to be alarmed at a speech

speech of this nature, from a lady of miss Mabel's politeness and good humour ; — she thought there must be some very powerful reasons, which had obliged her to make it ; and what those reasons could be, seemed at present an impenetrable secret. — She was too much disconcerted to be able to pass the whole evening, as she had promised the lady she went to she would do ; — she, therefore, pretended a sudden indisposition, took her leave, and went home, in order to be at full liberty to ruminate on what had passed in the park.

She had not been many minutes in her own apartment, before she was interrupted in her Meditations, by the coming of her two brothers. — Several bustos, pictures, pieces of old china, and other curiosities, belonging to a nobleman, lately deceased, being to be exposed to sale, the elder mr. Thoughtless had an inclination to become a purchaser of such of them as he should find agreeable to his fancy, but was willing to have his sister's judgment in the matter ; and it was to engage her to go with him the next morning about twelve o'clock, when the goods were to be exhibited to public view, that had occasioned him and mr. Francis to make her this visit. — It is not to be doubted, but that she was willing to oblige him in this point ;

point ; — she assured him, she would be ready against he came to call on her.

When she was alone, she began to run over in her mind, all the particulars of what had passed that evening in the park, and found something very extraordinary on the whole. — It had seemed extremely odd to her, that mr. Trueworth and sir Bazil did not join her, and the two miss Airishes ; but then she thought she could easily account for their not doing so, and that mr. Trueworth did not chuse to enter into any conversation with her, because sir Bazil had happened to see her at miss Forward's, and might possibly have entertained no favourable idea of her on that score : — she, therefore, with a great deal of readiness excused mr. Trueworth for this omission, especially as she was possessed of the fancy, that the compliment with which he returned her fan, and the look he assumed during that action, seemed to tell her, he wished for an opportunity of adding something more tender. — But when she came to consider on the second meeting, she was indeed very much at a loss to fathom the meaning of what she had seen ; — she knew a thousand accidents might have occasioned an acquaintance between miss Mabel and sir Bazil, and also, that the little she had with mr. Trueworth

Trueworth might have been casually improved; but could find not the least shadow of reason, why that lady should tell her, it was improper for to ask her to join company with them. — Though she had of late seen that lady less frequently than usual, yet, whenever they did meet, it was with the greatest civility and appearance of friendship: — she had, in reality, a sincere regard for her, and imagined the other looked upon her with the same, and therefore could not but believe, the shyness she put on in the park, when speaking to her, must have some very powerful motive to occasion it. — Suspence was, of all things, what miss Betsy could least bear; — she resolved to be convinced, though at the expence of that pride she would not have forfeited on any other account. — ‘ In spite of the ill-manners she has treated me with,’ said she, ‘ I will go once more to her, — satisfy my curiosity, as to the manner of her behaviour, and then never see her more.’

To be more sure of finding her at home, she thought it best to make the visit she intended in the morning: — accordingly she sent to her brother, that being obliged to go to a lady, who had desired to see her, she could not wait for his coming to

call on her, but would not fail to meet him at the place of sale, about the hour he had mentioned. — This promise she thought it would be easy for her to perform, as she designed to stay no longer with miss Mabel, than would be sufficient to get some light into a thing, which at present gave her so much perplexity.

She went about eleven o'clock, but was strangely surprised, on her coming to the house, to find all the windows shut up, and after the chairmen had knocked several times, the door opened by Nanny, the little prating wench, who had lived at mr. Goodman's. — ‘Nanny!’ cried miss Betsy, ‘bless me, do you live here?’ — ‘Yes, madam,’ answered she, ‘I have lived here ever since my master Goodman died.’ — ‘I am glad of it,’ returned miss Betsy; — ‘but pray is your lady at home?’ — ‘O, dear madam,’ said the girl, ‘my lady! — why, madam, don't you know what's done to day?’ — ‘Not I,’ replied she: — ‘prithee what dost mean? — What's done?’ — ‘Lord, madam,’ said Nanny, ‘I wonder you should not know it; — my lady is married to day.’ — ‘Married!’ cried miss Betsy hastily; — ‘to whom?’ — ‘To one sir Bazil Loveit, madam,’ replied the other; — ‘and mr. Trueworth is married

ried too, to one miss Harriot, sir Bazil's sister ; — my old master gave both the brides away. — I believe the ceremony is over by this time ; — but as soon as it is they all bowl away for sir Bazil's seat in Staffordshire : — they say there will be open house kept thiere, and the lord knows what doings. — All the servants are gone, — none but poor me left to look after the house.' — ' Mr. Trueworth married !' cried miss Betsy, in the greatest confusion, ' I thought his mistress had been dead.' — ' No, no, madam,' said Nanny ; — ' you mean mrs. Blanchfield, — I know all that story, — I was told it by one that comes often here : — mr. Trueworth, I assure you, never courted her ; — she was only in love with him, and on hearing his engagement with miss Harriot, took it to heart, poor soul, and died in a few days, and has left him half her fortune, and a world of fine things to miss Harriot.'

She was going on with this tittle-tattle, but miss Betsy was scarce in a condition to distinguish what she said ; — she leaned her head back against the chair, and was almost fainting away. — The maid perceiving the change in her countenance, cried out, ' Lord, madam, you are not well, — shall I get you any thing ? — but

‘ but now I think on it there is a bottle
‘ of drops my lady left behind her in the
‘ dressing-room, I’ll run and fetch them.’
— She was going to do as she said, but
miss Betsy recovering of herself, called to
her to stay, saying, she had no occasion
for any thing. — ‘ Lord, madam,’ said
she, ‘ I did not think the marriage of mr.
‘ Truworth would have been such a
‘ trouble to you, or I would not have
‘ told you any thing of it. — I am sure
‘ you might have had him if you would,
‘ I remember well enough how he fought
‘ for you with mr. Staple, and how he
‘ followed you up and down, where ever
‘ you went.— For that matter, miss Har-
‘ riot has but your leavings.’ — ‘ I give
‘ myself no trouble who has him,’ replied
miss Betsy, disdainfully, — ‘ it is not him
‘ I am thinking of; — I was only a little
‘ surprized, that miss Mabel should make
‘ such a secret of her affairs to me.’ —
‘ You know, madam,’ said Nanny, ‘ that
‘ my lady is a very close woman; — but
‘ I wonder, indeed, she should tell you
‘ nothing of it, for I have heard her speak
‘ the kindest things of you.’ — ‘ Well,—
‘ it is no matter,’ replied miss Betsy: —
‘ farewell, Nanny, — Then bid the chair-
men go on. — The confusion she was in,
hindered her from directing the chairmen
where to go; — so they were carrying her
home

home again, 'till she saw herself at the end of the street where she lived ; but then recollecting all at once where she had appointed to meet her brothers, she ordered them to go to Golden Square.

It seemed as if fate interested itself in a peculiar manner, for the mortification of this young lady ; — every thing contributed to give her the most poignant shock her soul could possibly sustain : — it was not enough that she had heard the cruel tidings of what she looked upon as the greatest of misfortunes, her eyes must also be witness of the stabbing confirmation : — the place of sale was within two houses of sir Bazil's ; but as she had never heard where that gentleman lived, could have no apprehensions of the spectacle she was to be presented with. — On her chair turning into the square, she saw that side of it, to which she had directed the men to carry her, crowded with coaches, horses, and a great concourse of people, some waiting for the bridal bounty, but more as idle spectators. — At first, she imagined it was on the account of the sale, but the same instant almost shewed her her mistake.

Several footmen with wedding favours in their hats, two of whom she knew by their

their faces, as well as by their liveries, belonged to Mr. Trueworth, were just mounting their horses : — the crowd was so thick about the door, that it was with some difficulty the chair passed on, and she had an opportunity of seeing much more than she desired. — There were three coaches and six : — in the first, went Sir Bazil and the new-made lady Loveit, the father of Miss Mabel, and a young lady whom Miss Betsy had sometimes seen in her company ; — in the second, were seated Mr. Trueworth, his bride, Mrs. Wellair, and a grave old gentleman ; — the third was filled by four maid-servants, and the two valet de chambres of the two bridegrooms, with a great deal of luggage before and behind. — The ladies and gentlemen were all in extreme rich riding habits, and the footmen, eleven in number, being all in new liveries, and spruce fellows, the whole cavalcade altogether made a very genteel appearance.

Miss Betsy, in spite of the commotions in her breast, could not forbear standing a little in the hall, after she had got out of her chair, till the whole had passed, — ‘ Well,’ said she, to herself, with a deep sigh, ‘ all is over, and I must think no more of Trueworth ; — but wherefore am I thus alarmed ? — He has long

• long since been lost to me, nor did I
• love him.'

She assumed all the courage her pride could supply her with, and had tolerably composed herself before she went up into the sale room ; — yet not so much but a paleness, mixed with a certain confusion, appeared in her countenance. Mr. Munden, who happened to be there, as well as her brothers, took notice of it, and asked, if she was not well ? To which she replied, with an uncommon presence of mind, that she was in perfect health, but had been frightened as she came along, by a great black ox, who, by the carelessness of the drivers, had like to have run his horns quite into the chair. — Mr. Munden, who never wanted politeness, and knew how to put on the most tender air whenever he pleased, expressed an infinity of concern for the accident she mentioned ; and this behaviour in him she either relished very well, or seemed to do so.

What credit her brothers gave to the story of the ox is uncertain : — they, as well as all the company in the room, had been drawn to the windows, by the noise of the cavalcade, which had set out from sir Bazil's. — Every one was talking of it when

when miss Betsy entered, and 'tis very probable the two mr. Thoughtlesses might imagine it had an effect upon her, in spite of the indifference she had always pretended ; — they were, however, too prudent to take any notice, especially as mr. Munden was present.

Whatever were the troubles of this young lady, her spirit enabled her to conceal them, and she gave her opinion of the goods, to be disposed on, with as much exactitude, as if her mind had been taken up with no other thing.

Mr. Thoughtless made a purchase of the twelve Cæsars in bronze, and two fruit pieces of Varelst's, and mr. Munden, on miss Betsy's expressing her liking of two very large curious jars, bought them, and presented them to her.

Nothing material passed here ; but the sale being over for that day, every one returned to their respective habitations, or wherever business, or inclination called them.

END of the THIRD VOLUME.









